The inspection of educational provision for children before compulsory school age

Nursery report on:
Buzzy Bees Nursery School

Registered Nursery Education Inspector: Mary Dyas
Date of inspection: 4th and 5th November 2009
Contract number: T/034/09N

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Report on the inspection of nursery settings in the non-maintained sector

Name of nursery: Buzzy Bees Nursery School

Address: 27 Chestnut Green  
West Pontnewydd  
Upper Cwmbran  
Torfaen

Post code: NP44 5TH

Telephone: 01633 484228

Person responsible for day-to-day management: Catherine Pritchard/Lisa Owen

Position: Nursery owners/Managers

About the inspection

This inspection took place as part of a national programme of inspections of the educational provision for children before compulsory school age in Wales. It was commissioned by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales.

The purpose of inspection is to identify good features and shortcomings so that providers can improve the quality of education offered and help children achieve their full potential. Another purpose is to inform parents and the public about the quality of nursery education. A copy of the inspection report must be given to all parents/carers with a child at the nursery and should be available on request to other people.

Inspectors have used a five-point scale to record all judgements. Grade definitions are:

Grade 1  good with outstanding features
Grade 2  good features and no important shortcomings
Grade 3  good features outweigh shortcomings
Grade 4  some good features, but shortcomings in important areas
Grade 5  many important shortcomings
1.0 Context of the setting

**Context of the nursery setting**
Buzzy Bees Nursery School opened in September 2001 in a building on the Thornhill Estate on the outskirts of Cwmbran in south east Wales. It is registered to take up to 26 children aged from birth to five years and includes places on the Flying Start Programme to provide funded provision for two year olds living within the area. The local area is an ex-council estate with many social difficulties. Many of the children attending Buzzy Bees come from the immediate area although a few travel from further afield to be closer to their parent’s place of work.

The nursery is open from 8am to 6pm all year round and only closes for Bank holidays and the Christmas week. There are currently 35 children on roll and all three of the three to four year olds at the time of the inspection were in receipt of funded educational provision which takes place from 9.15-11.30am every day. All three and four year olds speak English as their home language and were present on both mornings of the inspection. There are currently no children with identified additional learning needs but appropriate policies and procedures are in place for their welcome and inclusion.

The pre-school department occupies the ground floor of the building and comprises two main play rooms with a small side room given over to role play, an area for children’s toilets and a quiet area with books which shares the nursery office. There are small outdoor play areas at the front and back of the building. The front area is used mainly for physical play and the garden at the back has been surfaced with artificial grass and is laid out with a range of learning activities in line with those indoors. Children have direct access from the main playroom out into the back garden.

The Nursery was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in August 2009 and by Estyn in October 2003.

2.0 Main findings of the report

2.1 The overall quality and standards of educational provision and whether or not the provision successfully promotes the goals for children’s learning

The quality and standards of educational provision, taken over ll, are appropriate and successfully promote the Foundation Phase Outcomes for children’s learning.
2.2 Standards achieved by children in the seven areas of learning

In view of the small number of children aged 3-4 years attending the nursery, no judgements are made on their standards of achievement in the seven areas of learning. Instead the report makes reference to the experiences that the setting provides to develop children’s skills in the seven areas of learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of learning</th>
<th>Grade for under-fives</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity</td>
<td>No grade awarded for standards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language, literacy and communication skills</td>
<td>No grade awarded for standards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mathematical development</td>
<td>No grade awarded for standards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Welsh language development</td>
<td>No grade awarded for standards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge and understanding of the world</td>
<td>No grade awarded for standards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical development</td>
<td>No grade awarded for standards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creative development</td>
<td>No grade awarded for standards</td>
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2.3 Inspection judgement on the quality of education provided by the setting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality of education</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of provision for children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of planning for children’s learning</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of teaching</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of assessment and recording of children’s progress, and reports for parents and carers</td>
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<td>Quality of the relationships with parents, carers and the community</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>The extent to which the setting contributes to children’s wellbeing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of the leadership and management of the setting</td>
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<tr>
<td>The progress made by the setting in implementing the key issues for action identified in the last inspection report</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>
3.0 The experiences that the setting provides to develop children’s skills in the seven areas of learning

3.1 Personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity

Good features
Children have good opportunities to develop their confidence and to socialise and work together. Practitioners encourage them to make decisions, share learning resources and gain confidence in trying out new experiences.

Children’s concentration and exploration skills are promoted well through a good range of activities and all children are encouraged to become independent in taking responsibility for their personal hygiene and by helping to tidy equipment away into the right places.

The children are introduced to the language, culture and traditions of Wales and the wider world through the curriculum and daily routines.

Shortcomings
No important shortcomings were identified.

3.2 Language, literacy and communication skills

Good features
Practitioners encourage children to listen attentively especially during circle time, demonstrate how to handle books and stimulate children’s interest in them. Children’s enjoyment of books is promoted further by the provision of a welcoming, well-resourced book corner. It is cleverly situated in a quiet, comfortable corner of the nursery office and is visited spontaneously by children who enjoy its seclusion.

The use of labelling of illustrations and pictures around the setting, sometimes also in Welsh, helps children to develop their understanding that written symbols have both sound and meaning. The nursery is well resourced with books and ICT equipment.

Children have regular and varied opportunities to successfully develop their mark-making skills with a wide range of differently-sized brushes, pens, wax and pencil crayons. They have access to mark making equipment in several areas of learning to support their understanding of the functions of writing and are encouraged to recognise their names when they arrive in the nursery.

Shortcomings
No important shortcomings were identified.
3.3 Mathematical development

**Good features**
The setting provides an appropriate range of mathematical activities which encourage children’s interest in numbers, shapes and patterns. There is a designated area for mathematical development which has activities to develop sorting and matching skills.

Children have regular opportunities to sing number songs and rhymes and to join in with rote counting in circle time and in the course of their play. Practitioners promote the use of mathematical language in relevant contexts and both adults and children talk about containers being full and empty in the water tray, for instance, and compare numbers of pieces of pasta threaded onto pipe cleaners.

The role play area provides children with many opportunities to develop their counting skills and their understanding of money. Adults play with them to develop their early understanding of money and this encourages children to use money meaningfully in their play with one another. Children are also given the opportunity to use money when they visit the local shop to buy items for their play activities.

**Shortcomings**
No important shortcomings were identified.

3.4 Welsh language development

**Good features**
The provision for Welsh language development is generally appropriate and promotes children’s basic understanding of simple phrases. Practitioners read simple books with the children and introduce them to basic vocabulary.

**Shortcomings**
 Provision for Welsh language development is limited to circle time.
3.5   Knowledge and understanding of the world

**Good features**
Children are given daily opportunities to investigate the properties of different materials such as sand, water and soil, enhanced from time to time by materials such as cold spaghetti, for example, or by burying vegetables which grow underground in the sand tray.

The nursery promotes children’s understanding of the weather and seasons by offering opportunities for them to observe the weather directly and by considering the effect it has on animals and plants. Children are encouraged to take responsibility for caring for the pet rabbit; they learn that it needs daily food and water and that it does not like to come out of its cage in the cold weather. Regular visits to a nearby community farm enable the children to observe at first hand the similarities and differences between different animals and their babies.

**Shortcomings**
No important shortcomings were identified.

3.6   Physical development

**Good features**
Children are given opportunities to handle a good range of small tools and toys in order to improve their manual dexterity. They thread small objects onto pipe cleaners, use pens, pencils, glue spreaders, rolling pins, dough cutters and scissors to acquire physical control through a variety of activities.

There are regular opportunities for the children to play outside where they are able to develop different ways of moving. Although space and opportunity is limited in the nursery gardens, regular visits to a nearby open area enable children to climb and jump on logs and to practise their skills of, for example, running, skipping and hopping.

Practitioners also provide children with a variety of play equipment, such as balls, bean bags and hoops to enable them to develop different skills such as throwing and catching. Children also have opportunities to ride pedalled vehicles around the front garden.

**Shortcomings**
No important shortcomings were identified.
3.7 Creative development

**Good features**
Children are able to explore with a range of techniques and materials when creating images and objects. They also enjoy exploring and creating musical sounds on a variety of instruments both indoors and outdoors in the course of their play. As a group children enjoy listening to music and responding to suggestions to play, dance or move in different ways. They are encouraged to play instruments in time to a beat and to try to play loudly or quietly and quickly or slowly on command.

Practitioners support children in their imaginative play by joining in and modelling play in the role play area or with a small world setting.

**Shortcomings**
Although there are no important shortcomings sometimes children’s freedom to create objects and images of their own are limited by prescribed adult outcomes.
4.0 The quality of educational provision

The quality of educational provision for 3-4 year-olds and for 4-5 year-olds

4.1 Quality of provision for children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good features</th>
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<tr>
<td>The nursery has clear aims regarding values and principles that are supported by policies which lay out the behaviour and attitudes expected from its practitioners.</td>
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Practitioners provide many exciting opportunities to promote respect for a diversity of beliefs and social and cultural traditions. Children are given opportunities to taste different foods, to dress up and to make items relating to the topics they are learning about. The setting has celebrated a range of festivals including Diwali and Chinese New Year in addition to the traditional Christian festivals.

The policies and routines of the group successfully promote positive behaviour. Practitioners are good role models and support the children through the use of praise. Children work and play very well together. Day to day activities promote equality of opportunity and respect for each child as an individual.

Children are introduced to the Welsh language through daily use of basic greetings, and the introduction of simple Welsh language books. St David’s Day is well used to introduce the children to some of the culture and traditions of Wales.

Staff provide very meaningful experiences for the children to develop an awe and understanding of the wonders of nature and the world around them through their use of the well resourced outside play area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shortcomings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practitioners do not make use of incidental Welsh during the session to consolidate the children’s use and understanding of the language.</td>
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4.2 Quality of planning for children’s learning

<table>
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<td>Planning follows practice recommended by the local authority and is centred on topics following the children’s interests and suggestions and covers the seven areas of learning of the Foundation Phase.</td>
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Planning is undertaken by the pre-school leader and centres around topics chosen for their relevance and interest to the children. Medium term plans focus on skills to be developed and identify skills, resources and activities which might be used. Weekly plans identify focussed adult led activities and are carefully evaluated to lead into future plans. Activities planned for outdoors are clearly highlighted.
Planning follows practice recommended by the local authority and is centred on topics following the children’s interests and suggestions and covers the seven areas of learning of the Foundation Phase. Plans clearly identify learning intentions and activities for the outdoor area. Staff discuss together the medium term plans and then each week share any ideas for the following week. These are then collated with identified learning intentions and specific focus activities.

Irrespective of background, gender, needs or ability the children have equal access and opportunity to learn and achieve

**Shortcomings**
No important shortcomings were identified.

### 4.3 Quality of teaching

**Good features**
Both the owner/managers of the nursery are qualified teachers and play an active part in the teaching and learning of the pre-school group. The pre-school leader is qualified to level 4 and she is supported by appropriately qualified assistants. All practitioners demonstrate a sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Phase.

All practitioners are well aware of the needs of the children in their care. They interact positively with the children and and make very good use of open questioning to encourage the children to speak and to think things through. Adults ensure that all children are actively involved in their play especially quieter less assertive individuals.

The nursery benefits from regular input from the Early Years advisory service from the local authority and there is good evidence that advice and suggestions have been acted upon to the benefit of the standards of provision.

**Shortcomings**
There are no important shortcomings but sometimes activities do not provide enough challenge for more able and adventurous individuals.
4.4 Quality of assessment and recording of children’s progress and reports for parents and carers

**Good features**
Practitioners are beginning to measure children’s progress effectively the seven areas of learning. The pre-school leader makes useful observational assessments of children at play and when undertaking activities. Assessment comments are dated and evaluative, and the way forward for individuals has begun to be noted. These assessments provide useful information which is beginning to be used to improve teaching and learning. Practitioners are always available each day if required to provide parents and carers with verbal information about their children’s development. In addition the leader completes a daily diary for every child with both care and educational information.

Shortly after they move into the pre-school group children are given the baseline assessment recommended by the local authority and this is repeated in January and again in the summer to assess progress. At the end of the year parents and carers receive a written report which gives good information of children’s progress under the seven areas of learning.

**Shortcomings**
There are no important shortcomings the end of year reports for parents and carers do not clearly identify the way forward.

4.5 Quality of the relationships with parents, carers and the community

**Good features**
The nursery’s welcome pack provides appropriate information for parents and carers. Parents are kept informed about the educational provision for their child through regular newsletters, notes in the children’s diaries and verbally when they bring and collect their children. Feedback from questionnaires and discussion with parents and carers is positive. Parents are pleased with the standard of care given to their children. They appreciate the fact that they can informally discuss any concerns they have at any time and feel that all staff are friendly and approachable.

A particularly good feature of the nursery is the use it makes of the local environment. Children are taken to visit the library in the town and also the mobile library which comes very three weeks. The local community farm is a well used resource as are the nearby open space and children’s play area. The children also regularly visit the neighbourhood shop to buy items for their activities.

Visitors to the group such as the community constable and health visitor help the children to learn more about the world around them and about different types of work.

**Shortcomings**
There are no important shortcomings but the parent’s information pack does not contain a full explanation of the Foundation Phase and the seven areas of learning.
4.6 The extent to which the setting contributes to children's wellbeing

**Good features**
The nursery has a comprehensive set of policies in place covering all areas of keeping children safe and these are freely available to all parents, carers and visitors. The owners are jointly responsible for child protection and have received very recent update training. All staff have been trained in child protection procedures and are aware of their responsibilities.

Meals and snacks provided for the children are planned to ensure a balanced and healthy diet and children have daily opportunities to take strenuous exercise.

Staff show great care and affection for the children and are very supportive of their individual needs. There are few behaviour problems.

**Shortcomings**
No important shortcomings were identified.

4.7 Quality of the leadership and management of the setting

**Good features**
The nursery has a good culture of self evaluation. The structure recommended by the local authority provides a foundation whereby different areas of the provision are regularly reviewed and manageable targets set and there is clear evidence that these targets are being worked towards. In addition the setting has successfully completed the Primary Effective Early Learning programme of supported self evaluation and improvement.

An annual appraisal is in place where targets for the forthcoming year are agreed. In addition every member of staff is involved in a Management Support and Development Programme every 12 weeks when problems, training needs and staff progress is discussed and any support required is organised.

The building is quite small and free use of the space available is difficult but the managers have worked hard to facilitate this, including moving the nursery office to provide a more accessible role play area and much work has recently been undertaken in the garden to provide outdoor learning opportunities.

**Shortcomings**
No important shortcomings were identified.
4.8 The progress made by the setting in implementing the key issues for action identified in the last inspection report

The nursery has made good progress in implementing the key issues for action identified in the last inspection report.

5.0 Recommendations

The setting needs to:

R1 Continue to improve standards of Welsh language development

R2 Improve levels of challenge appropriate to children’s stage of development

R3 Ensure that the handbook for parents fully explains the educational provision made by the nursery

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days, or 45 working days if the plan needs to be translated to or from Welsh, showing how the issues identified above will be addressed. The action plan must be given to all parents/carers with a child at the setting. A copy of the action plan must be sent to the Chair of the Early Years and Childcare Partnership or Children and Young Peoples’ Partnership, as appropriate, and to the Local Authority. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection.