



Three Bears Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY312682
Inspection date	21 April 2006
Inspector	Christine Coram
Setting Address	St George's Church Hall, Jumpers Road, Christchurch, Dorset, BH23 2JR
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Registered person	Nicola Carter
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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 good. 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?

The Three Bears Pre-School has been operating in the current premises since 2003 but registered in 2005 under new ownership. The pre-school operates from two rooms in St George's Church Hall in a residential area of Christchurch and serves families in the local area. The pre-school is registered to provide care for 26 children. There are 67 children on roll, including 36 in receipt of nursery funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school supports children with special needs.

The pre-school opens five mornings a week during school term times, from 09:00 until 12:45, and from 13:30 to 16:00 on Monday and Wednesday afternoons.

The pre-school employs 7 staff. Of these, 5, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications, one member of staff is working towards a qualification and one is working towards a further qualification.

The setting receives support from a Child Care Support Officer and an Early Years Inclusion Consultant.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's hygiene is promoted well and they learn good hygiene habits, as they are all encouraged to wash their hands before snack and lunch. They know that they do this 'because of the germs'. Tables are cleaned with anti-bacterial spray before meals. Children who need medication are protected as the consent and record forms are comprehensive and use clear language. Parents and staff communicate effectively in this way so that children receive the required dosage and parents are kept fully informed.

Children's need for frequent drinks is met very well as there is a drinking water dispenser. Children can help themselves to a drink at any time and do so confidently. Children's nutritional health is promoted effectively through particularly healthy snacks. These consist of a wide variety of fruit for children to choose. They confidently help themselves from the plate. This is followed by a cracker. There is a healthy choice of milk or water to drink. Children bring a packed lunch and again, their health is promoted because staff set out food from the lunch boxes on plates. They initially set out sandwiches and savoury foods to ensure that children eat the most nutritious items first.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Space is well organised with activities set out around the room. Children have easy and safe access to them. There is sufficient space to move safely between them. The rooms are made welcoming and child orientated, by use of posters on the walls, colourful toys ready for children's use and mats for comfortable floor play. Children are kept safe as equipment is kept in suitable condition through regular checking and cleaning. Children can select play equipment from draws. These have labels with both pictures and words. Good use is made of the outside area. This is a safe and suitable area with plenty of space. It is fully fenced and accessed directly from main room.

Children's safety is effectively promoted through very clear procedures. For example,

staff are vigilant in making sure that children are never left alone with an adult who has not been vetted.

Comprehensive risk assessments are used to monitor and promote safety. Children are supported and supervised effectively because staff are deployed well. Staff are involved with children's activities but do look around and know where children are. The staff activity rota ensures that they are deployed at different activities and this system works well. Children are kept safe from possible harm or abuse because staff are very confident about the child protection procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from a range of resources and activities that are out for free choice as they arrive. They have plenty of choice through most of the session, which ensures that they have varied experiences and activities. The progress of all children is monitored appropriately for their stage of development. For part of the session, the children are split into key worker groups. The younger children gain less from this as at this time their choice of activity is limited.

Nursery Education.

Teaching and Learning are satisfactory. Children are sociable and confident. Most come into the setting with excitement to see what is available to play with. They quickly become involved in activities and display high levels of involvement, persisting at some until called together for the next part of the session. Children help themselves to resources at the sand tray, demonstrating confidence and independence. Children are beginning to show care and concern for others. For example, one child tells the inspector that she is using the other child's yellow paint. She adds 'I'm sharing my pink with her - she hasn't got one'. The sharing continues happily. Children are sociable and choose to play in groups.

Children frequently use the book corner. Some look at books alone and others enjoy a story read by staff. They listen with interest and answer questions, making suggestions about the story. They look with interest at the pictures. Some children write their names on their work with no support. Four year olds cut efficiently with scissors. They show clear purpose and are very confident. Less able children can also cut and show great concentration in doing so. Children are beginning to associate sounds with letters. They happily repeated 'fff' and when asked, several children were able to think of words beginning with F such as 'fish'. They talk a great deal in play. For example, a four year old says 'I'm going to buy some (flowers) for my mummy. You're not allowed to take them home so we just have to pretend.' They show good expression and are able to order thoughts and express them in words. They recall stories and films, and transfer ideas to play. For example, a child states: 'I'm a bad clone - it's from Star Wars. But it's alright - we turn back in to good ones when we're died'.

Children are able to count items such as three pieces of fruit on the plate. Some know that there is not enough left for all of the children to have one and count the

children to prove the point. They count by rote beyond 20 in a group. A child at the painting easel stated 'it's a circle' when asked about his picture. However, children generally use limited mathematical language.

Children learn about the natural environment. They know that tadpoles turn into frogs and are familiar with words such as 'frogspawn'. They are learning how to operate simple IT equipment and use children's computers with enthusiasm. A 4 year old tells a younger child how to use one of these, demonstrating confidence with the equipment. Children explore items in different ways. For example, by rubbing play-dough on their cheek and touching it on their lips to feel the texture.

Children develop physical skill and can combine these. For example, a 4 year old picks up a plastic stool and carries it whilst running, putting it down in the place she needs it with confidence and sits on it quickly. Children work hard to stir the play dough mixture, changing position to use both hands. They knead the mixture using both palms and fingers, pressing hard and sweeping the flour back under the dough with clear understanding and intent. They kick balls, throw and attempt to catch. They are generally accurate with adult support. They demonstrate confidence and skill in climbing over and crawling under the climbing frame. They run, successfully avoiding other children.

Children develop creative skills with different materials. They construct confidently with commercially produced construction toys. They experiment with different tools for painting. A child uses a sponge in one hand and small brush in the other, then chooses a thick brush and holds it with both hands, making wide circular movements. Next, he holds it right by the tip and presses it on the paper. He watches intently, observing the effect he makes. Children join in well developed imaginative play. A 4 year old uses a toy cordless phone as a police radio, imitating what he has seen on the TV. Another child copies the action with an ordinary phone. A scenario develops and the two remain in this play for some time.

Staff support children in their activities. They support their imaginative play well, suggesting what a police officer might say on the phone and giving example of scenarios. However, staff are not always clear about the learning aims of activities. When asked what they hope children will gain, they speak of the different skills children used and what they talked about but are not clear about the intended learning objectives. Staff are bright and interested in the activities. They interact with the children throughout. They ask questions but these are not always open or sufficiently challenging. Children are divided into groups during the session for different activities and this grouping is beneficial for teaching funded children.

The curriculum planning links very clearly with Early Learning Goals. Plans state how staff are deployed and the objectives for each of the areas. Weekly learning opportunities are detailed and show how each area will be used to promote the Early Learning Goals and how specific opportunities will be provided. An 'adult focus activity sheet' gives detail about the learning intentions of specific activities. The planning is a thorough system but not all staff are following this sufficiently to ensure that children achieve the aims.

Basic assessments of children's progress are completed. These relate to the

Stepping Stones and included observations of the individual child. Any areas for development identified are discussed by the staff group and taken into account during sessions. Children with special educational needs have additional records, which include individual education plans and information from other professionals. All the required documentation is in order.

Staff manage children's behaviour effectively. Suitable methods are used, and staff talk to them quietly about their behaviour in a way that they can understand. Staff encourage children and talk positively to them.

The routine runs smoothly through the session and allows plenty of time for each activity. The snack was dealt with efficiently so that children who finished quickly went straight back to activities and children who stayed indoors had plenty to play with immediately. This is one example of how the time is used well.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children learn about the differences in society through the variety of images around them. They learn positive attitudes through the interesting variety of topics in the year's planning. Staff value the children as individuals. Children with special needs are supported well. Staff liaise with other professionals who are welcomed into the group and leave specific activities. Staff follow these through with the children who benefit from this co-operation and continuity. They are fully involved and included in the setting. Children behave well and respond to staff. If there are issues with behaviour, suitable methods are used such as 'time out'. Staff encourage children and talk appropriately and positively to them. The social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of children is fostered.

Parents are well informed and included in the setting. A helpful information pack gives clear over-views of the aims and objectives, staffing, policy and Nursery Education. The pack states that policies are available for parents to read. Parents and children are welcomed at the door giving continuity and security to the children. However, parents currently do not have access to the complaints log.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents are pleased with the level of information given to them by staff and find the information pack helpful. Information is provided about the topics and activities through newsletters and notices. Parents are invited to look at their child's records of achievement at the end of each term and appreciate the sharing of information by staff. They are confident to share information about their child's progress with staff.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from being cared for by well-qualified staff. Suitable levels of staff work directly with the children throughout the session. Children are protected through

thorough recruitment and vetting procedures, which ensure that the adults in the setting are suitable.

Children are put into groups for key worker times. These sessions are not always used effectively for younger children. However, they ensure that older children benefit from more structured activities and learning times. Children also split into two groups for story time and this is very effective. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide. The required records are kept and are in order. Records for both children and staff are clear. However, parents do not have access to the complaints log.

Leadership and management of the setting are satisfactory. The Registered Person has clear aims for the setting and monitors the performance of staff to ensure that these are met. She works closely with the staff and takes account of their suggestions and opinions. The educational programme is assessed at the end of each term and any issues are discussed with the whole staff team. For example, they discuss the effectiveness of the planning and assessment systems, which have recently been introduced. Any identified weaknesses are addressed. The Registered Person readily seeks and receives support and advice from the Early Years consultants. There is a clear commitment to the improvement and development of the setting. Staff demonstrate a will to succeed and a keen interest in progression.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

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.

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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):

- continue to develop and organise the key worker sessions so that children across the whole age-range will benefit
- make sure that the complaints log is available for parents to see on request

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):

- increase the use of mathematical language throughout the session to encourage children to be aware of numbers, shapes and measure in all activities
- increase the staff's understanding the learning aims of each activity so that children gain the desired benefit

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