



Little Bears Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY304092
Inspection date	19 June 2006
Inspector	Fiona Sapler
Setting Address	3 The Green, London, E11 2NT
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Registered person	Little Bears Nursery School Ltd
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 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?

Little Bears Nursery School is a privately owned nursery which was registered in 2005. It operates from four main rooms in a large, converted house and is situated in the Wanstead area of the London Borough of Redbridge, close to local shops and transport.

A maximum of 35 children may attend at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children have access to a

secure, enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 44 children from birth to under five years on roll. Of these, two children receive funding for early education. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 14 staff, including the manager. Of these, 12 hold appropriate Early Years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children play in a clean environment where they learn the importance of good personal hygiene through regular routines. Older children understand that washing their hands, with soap, after visiting the toilet and before eating reduces the risk of passing on germs.

There are effective procedures in place to prevent the spread of infection, for example there is a 'no shoes policy' in the baby and toddler rooms. Children who are infectious do not attend and parents are contacted immediately if their children are taken ill. Staff have very efficient procedures in place to care for sick children, for example, when they regularly monitor their temperatures on a chart to inform parents.

Children are protected as medication and accidents are recorded very comprehensively. Parents give prior written consent to administer medication ensuring children receive the correct dosage according to their needs. An effective system is in place that ensures staff in each room are aware of all accidents and medication administration, so that parents are informed accordingly. All staff hold a current first aid certificate, which means they can give appropriate care if there is an accident.

Children enjoy varied and nutritious meals that are cooked on the premises and which meet special dietary needs and ensure children remain healthy. Fresh drinking water is available for the older children to access independently throughout the day. This ensures they avoid dehydration and are aware of their own body's need to drink.

All children have access to the outdoor area at least once a day. They benefit from fresh air and exercise and the opportunity to practise and develop their physical skills. Older children move confidently and in a variety of ways. They are competent when using the slide and show good co-ordination when moving around. They are developing their skills when throwing, catching and playing bat and ball games with staff members. Babies and children under three are able to play on wheeled toys and crawl around in a safe environment.

Babies' individual routines for eating and sleeping are followed closely by staff. These are discussed with parents initially and are recorded clearly to ensure continuity of

care. However, weaknesses in the organisation and deployment of staff at mealtimes, results in babies not being sufficiently supported at all times. For example, some babies do not receive individual attention when staff are busy feeding others and those who are able to hold their own spoons are not given the opportunity to experiment feeding themselves, to develop their independence.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their play in an extremely safe environment where staff are vigilant and use informal risk assessments well to reduce potential hazards. The children are able to enjoy the fresh air in a safe outdoor play area. Indoors, they benefit from a spacious, well-organised setting where they can move around independently and have access to an extensive range of toys and resources.

All children learn simple rules that help keep them safe when playing and they benefit from a wide range of safety measures, for example socket covers and a comprehensive emergency evacuation procedure that takes into consideration the additional needs of the babies and younger children. However, this has not been practised regularly to ensure all staff and children are aware of the drill.

The security of the setting is very effective, ensuring children are unable to leave the premises without a suitable adult and preventing unwanted visitors gaining access. Children are safeguarded as there are clear procedures for outings. Parents give prior written consent for their children to be taken out on trips to play areas, and other places of interest, that are thoroughly risk assessed.

Soft furnishings allow babies to crawl and learn to walk without hurting themselves on sharp corners. There are sufficient cots and beds that allow children to rest and sleep in comfort, and safety, and staff regularly check sleeping children to ensure their safety and well-being.

Children are protected because staff have a good understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse and know what action to take if they have concerns about a child in their care. This ensures staff quickly recognise when a child is in danger and can act in the child's best interest.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children benefit from having daily access to a very stimulating outdoor area that is full of interest and excitement. Children are able to run around freely and explore many different areas that provide a wide range of sensory experiences. For example, they enjoy following the brightly coloured path of stepping stones, playing quietly in the shade in a big tent that is draped with a variety of fabrics, experimenting with the parachute or are fascinated by the different sized windmills and streamers blowing in the wind.

Children under three explore and experiment through a range of well-planned activities that are appropriate for their stage of development and provide stimulation and challenge. Young children are encouraged to express their thoughts and feelings through staff's good use of questioning and repeating children's responses to encourage the children's developing language skills. The children enjoy listening to stories and learn about the meaning of words through staff's expressive reading. They are beginning to join in action songs that help develop their co-ordination.

Children's creative and imaginative development is encouraged through activities such as art and craft, painting, listening to and playing music, singing, dancing and role-play.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff create a stimulating environment where children's work is displayed and labelled attractively. This shows children's work is valued and gives them a sense of belonging. Staff talk to children about what they are doing and respond to children's interests. They use good questioning techniques to stimulate thought and challenge the children and appropriate strategies to support individuals. They use lots of praise and encouragement to build children's confidence and self-esteem and encourage children to have respect for each other, for the resources and for their environment. The children help clear up after activities and are encouraged to work together.

Staff are good role models and demonstrate a positive attitude towards learning by presenting activities in an interesting and enthusiastic manner. Children are encouraged to be independent and make their own choices because the toys and resources are easily accessible.

Staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage, although, currently, planned activities do not sufficiently support all six areas of learning. Observations of individual children help staff monitor children's progress and achievements that are recorded in the children's individual profiles. However, they do not identify the next steps for each child to ensure that appropriate activities are included in future planning. Children with particular needs are supported to maximise their learning.

Children are able to concentrate, sit quietly and are highly involved in their chosen activities. Children are developing good relationships and get on well with their peers and adults. They understand the need to share and take turns when playing together. They are developing their independence when they see to their own personal needs. For instance, when they independently visit the toilet and wash their hands, try to put on and take off their own shoes and aprons, serve themselves their lunch, pour their own drinks and when they initiate clearing up spilt water at snack time.

Children speak confidently and ask simple questions. Children enjoy books and handle them carefully. They spend time 'reading' and sharing books with friends and can relate well-known stories by looking at the pictures. They listen avidly at story time. Children are beginning to experiment with writing recognisable letters from their own names but staff do not help extend this and do not link sounds to letters. Interesting activities, such as the role play area as a travel agents, increases the

children's awareness of the different purposes of writing.

Children are interested in counting. They learn about size and use appropriate maths language through practical activities, for instance when they count out plastic fruit to represent what the hungry caterpillar has eaten. However, there are limited activities throughout the day that enable them to practise a range of mathematical skills such as calculation or comparisons.

Children have few opportunities to use information and communication technology however they do enjoy using walkie talkies and telephones during role-play. They have learnt about how things grow by planting their own bean plants that are proudly displayed on the window sill. They have compiled a book that records the progress their plants have made. Children take part in few activities that develop their understanding of time and place, although they have some concept of time as they follow their daily routines.

Children express themselves creatively through a range of mediums. They paint, draw and make collages that represent their experiences. Children use their senses when they listen to music and when they feel a range of textures when they use their hands and thick paint to make interesting patterns. They enjoy singing together at circle time and enthusiastically join in with action songs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children learn to respect other cultures and people's differences through a range of enjoyable activities. They dress up in bright sari fabrics, paint figures in a variety of skin colours or are involved in completing interesting puzzles or choose suitable books that reflect a range of cultures and backgrounds. Children are treated with respect and staff use lots of praise and encouragement to promote the children's self-esteem and a positive self-image. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children have equal opportunities to maximise their enjoyment and potential because staff encourage all children to participate in the activities provided and treat the children as individuals and acknowledge their differences and preferences. There are good systems in place to support children who have special needs. Close liaison with parents and outside agencies ensures all children's needs are well planned for and met.

Appropriate strategies, according to the age and stage of development, help children understand right from wrong. They learn important social skills such as sharing and listening to each other, enjoy each other's company and treat each other kindly.

Partnership with parents and carers whose children receive nursery education is satisfactory. Parents receive verbal information about the Foundation Stage that outlines what and how their children will learn, however, this information is insufficient to ensure they can be fully involved in their children's learning. Regular reports help them monitor their children's progress and development.

'My day' forms, for children under three, ensure continuity of care. The staff respect parents' wishes and this enables them to meet individual needs regarding routines. A good two-way flow of information ensures parents are involved in their child's day and are happy to approach staff if they have any concerns.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management is good. The nursery is led by a motivated and enthusiastic manager who is committed to providing and developing the service she provides to meet the care and educational needs of all the children. She is able to recognise areas of weakness and has devised action plans to work towards her aims and goals. She has regularly updated her knowledge of childcare issues to enhance her current practices to support the care and learning of the children. The preschool room has undergone a lot of changes in the short time the nursery has been opened, that have affected the monitoring, provision and planning of the Nursery Education provided, as a result, not all aspects of the Foundation Stage are fully covered. However, this is now being addressed and a new team is being established to help develop this part of the provision.

The nursery provides an attractive and child friendly environment, it is very well laid out and staff show a clear understanding of their role in supporting the children in their play and learning. Most staff are suitably qualified. Children are well grouped and the key worker system ensures appropriate support and care throughout the session. Staff work well as a team and clear communication and guidance allows them to provide a stimulating well-balanced programme.

Children always have appropriate supervision as there are suitable contingency plans in place to cover for absences and lunch breaks. There are appropriate procedures in place for uncollected and lost children to promote the children's welfare. Children are safeguarded as unqualified assistants are not left alone with the children.

The manager identifies training needs and staff are encouraged to enrol on relevant courses to support their designated roles within the setting. This supports staff in these roles and ensures they have the latest and most relevant information available. Other training is organised to meet specific needs across the whole provision, for example, all staff are currently undergoing training in the Birth to Three framework.

A well planned induction programme ensures that the staff team are familiar with, and are able to implement effectively, the nurseries policies and procedures. All staff undergo checks to ensure they are suitable to work with children.

All documentation required for the safe and effective management of the nursery is in place. This contributes to the welfare of the children. Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

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):

- develop the organisation of mealtimes to ensure babies receive suitable support, and interaction, and are encouraged to develop their independence
- practise and evaluate fire drills to ensure all staff and children are aware of the procedures to follow.

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):

- use observations and assessments to plan for the next steps in children's individual learning
- ensure all areas of the foundation stage curriculum are fully covered specifically aspects identified as weaknesses in Mathematical Development, Communication, Language and Literacy and Knowledge and Understanding of the World
- develop methods of sharing information with parents about the Foundation Stage and how they can be more involved in their children's learning.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk