

# Blue Bear Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY339181
<b>Inspection date</b>	22 March 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Joan, Patricia Flowers
<b>Setting Address</b>	Strike Lane Primary School, Strike Lane, Freckleton, Preston, PR4 1HR
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<b>Registered person</b>	Blue Bear Pre-school Limited
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

Blue Bear Pre-school is a committee run facility with registered charity status. It operates from Strike Lane Primary School in Freckleton, near Preston. The children have access to a pre-school classroom, the school hall and the out of school club room used for serving the midday meal. Children are provided with a snack each morning and afternoon, and children who stay all day or over the lunch period bring packed lunches. Toileting facilities are en-suite to the pre-school room. The enclosed and purpose built outdoor play area is directly accessed from the pre-school room and occasional use is made of the main school playground. The times of operation are between 09.00 and 15.45 during term-time, with children attending for a variety of session times. The committee employs four permanent staff and a pool of support staff is also used. There are two managers employed, with most permanent staff qualified in Early Years Childcare to National Vocational Qualification Level 2 or 3. One staff member is currently working towards a Level 2 qualification. There are 39 children on roll aged between two years and five years. The setting offers funded nursery education places for eligible three and four-year-old children of whom there are 22. The setting is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and is supported by the local authority Sure Start development and teacher team.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children enjoy snacks during each session which contribute very well towards them having a well balanced and nutritious diet and which takes account of their individual dietary needs. Children enjoy plenty of fresh fruit and raw vegetable sticks on a daily basis, together with bread sticks and other healthy carbohydrate snacks providing them with energy to grow and make the most out of their time at pre-school. Children can choose at snack times to have either water or milk to drink. A water dispenser is available throughout the day which children access for themselves. This promotes their independence and well-being as they recognise when they are thirsty, after physical activities for example. Individual children's dietary needs are met very well. There is a secure system employed to ensure that children are provided only with foods that are allowed, so their individual and specific needs are always met. This gives reassurance to parents and maintains children's personal health and food safety very well.

All children are actively learning to be healthy, as they follow age-appropriate routines and procedures as they learn about personal hygiene practices. These are effectively supervised and encouraged through routines and implemented by staff so that children's health is promoted. Children are fully encouraged to be independent in their personal care and they confidently and independently recognise their own needs. Consequently, they wash their hands after visiting the toilet and before eating their snacks or their lunches. In these ways, the spread of infection and cross-contamination is minimised. Because all practitioners are trained in first aid, appropriate responses to accidents are made so that children's health is promoted to a high degree.

The well-planned curriculum delivered by staff provides children with a range of outdoor activities, so that they can enjoy fresh air and good physical exercise on a daily basis. Children's bodily awareness, coordination and muscle development are encouraged during activities such as running, climbing, sliding, balancing and pedalling using age-appropriate resources and apparatus. Obstacle courses challenge pre-school children. Children, as a consequence, are helped to achieve good physical health and are encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle, at the same time as developing their emerging skills effectively.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children can safely access all the toys and equipment available. The play resources meet the required safety standards and staff ensure that items remain safe because they carry out routine checks. Risk assessments are carried out; these also include risk assessments for outings. The outdoor school playground area, however, is not sufficiently secure to ensure children's safety. The staff help children to develop their awareness of their own safety because they continually supervise them and gently remind them to take care not to bump into their friends when they play outdoors. Children learn about other aspects of keeping safe when they take part in the emergency evacuation practise each half term.

Children are cared for in a very safe, secure and welcoming environment. The staff are extremely vigilant as they support the children in their play. For example, children are closely supervised as they explore inside the setting and when playing outside. The children's arrival at, and departure from, the setting are carefully monitored by the staff. A clear record is kept of visitors

to the setting and detailed risk assessments ensure that potential hazards are minimised and children's safety is maintained. Visitors are invited to provide road safety and fire safety awareness activities; these help children to understand about keeping safe. Clear fire safety precautions, such as fire detection and firefighting equipment, are in place and the regular fire evacuation practises help raise the children's awareness of how to deal with emergencies.

Children's safety and welfare is further safeguarded should there be any concerns of abuse as practitioners clearly understand their responsibilities for recording and reporting any child protection issues to the appropriate authorities. Designated staff have attended child protection awareness training and the written policy is available to all staff and parents. As a result, children's continuing well-being is effectively managed in such circumstances. The policy however omits some procedural detail.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Every child who attends, experiences and benefits from an extensive range of play opportunities that promote their all-round development and learning. They are very happy, confident and self-assured within the setting and look forward to attending. Most practitioners working with pre-school children have a secure understanding of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage and the stepping stones. Planning is undertaken to provide children with learning experiences in all areas of their development. The use of themes throughout the year helps practitioners focus on providing meaningful activities so that children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities are developed. Activities build on children's natural curiosity as learners and they have freedom of choice to select their own learning materials and play items. They benefit from resources stored at child level and activities which engage and capture their interests. All children experience warm relationships with their key worker and other practitioners and play harmoniously side by side with children of similar and older ages. Their care, play and learning are supported very effectively throughout the day by key workers who get to know their key children well. Children under three years enjoy lots of planned and free choice activities and explorative play that takes account of the current good practice frameworks. They play with interest with all the resources that are made easily available to them, as they become increasingly independent and learn that they can make choices for themselves. They are provided with opportunities to develop their physical skills, when encouraged to skip, hop and stretch in time to activity tapes to promote their enjoyment of physical activities and learn to negotiate the space they are in as a group.

Children love to be creative as they take part in both free art and planned craft activities which they see displayed and are proud of. Making Easter cards to take home allows children time to concentrate while being creative. Children play with the cars and the large wooden building blocks as well as large cardboard boxes as they construct side by side and with staff. They enjoy dressing up as they act out different roles, such as a police officer and a firefighter, as their imagination is fired by the topic about 'People who help us'. They are enthralled whilst listening to stories read to them individually and in small groups, confident to answer the practitioner's questions about the story. One three-year-old became engrossed in 'reading' to her doll in the book area, copying the way she has so often observed the practitioners do as she sat the doll on the carpet in front of her.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and children's learning is satisfactory. Children are progressing in all areas of learning. Long, medium and short-term plans ensure that sessions are inventive and balanced successfully between adult-led and self-initiated activities that incorporate all the six areas of learning. Children are motivated, for example, estimating and using concepts such as 'nearly full', 'heavy' and 'empty', as practitioners support them with meaningful questions that make children think. The use of equipment within the setting provides good opportunities for children to be exposed to different technologies such as computers, programmable toys and tape recorders. Their skill at using and controlling the mouse when they play educational games on the computer promotes their hand-eye coordination very well and they get to use items like tape recorders in their imaginative and role play activities.

Children are very well settled in the setting and respond positively to learning about themselves and each other, showing kindness and good manners in everyday routine situations. This is a strength within the setting. Children benefit from having regular opportunities to develop their listening and talking skills in planned and structured activities, such as at circle times as a whole group and also in smaller, focused groups. They get to know one another and eagerly sing familiar songs with gusto, followed by lots of smiles. They chat to each other during play and understand about taking turns in their conversations and generally in their play. Most children can confidently identify the initial letter in their own name, with some children able to write their full name on their artwork and also select their name cards correctly when they self-register.

Children are learning confidently to count by rote, as well as understanding the concept of number as they perform simple calculations in number rhymes. Practitioners use opportunities during planned and free play activities to make links across all learning areas, such as counting the linking shapes and grouping them into sets by colour and then by size. There are examples of numbers within the environment for children to use in practical and spontaneous ways. Children are learning successfully about colour when they mix and experiment with paint at the easel. More creatively able children are not always extended sufficiently. Most three and four-year-old children can name and recognise primary colours with confidence. Children have opportunities to observe change as they make links in simple science projects, such as baking, and when they watch their seeds grow. The tadpoles in the tank support the topic that children have undertaken and they are able to explain how the tadpoles change as they grow and eventually become frogs. Magnifying glasses allow them to observe this change with wonder, replicating the process in the pictures they have produced and displayed. Children, therefore, are making sound links as they learn about the world around them.

Children respond to routine very well, therefore giving them a sense of time and place and a feeling of belonging. They are learning to use small equipment, such as scissors, paint brushes and tools for malleable materials like play dough, so they become competent in finer muscle movements. Children have regular opportunities to play outside, using a range of outdoor play resources such as bikes, balls, hoops and climbing apparatus. Children's physical skills are hence encouraged very well and older children develop and manage their sense of adventure, as they learn about taking risks in a supervised and controlled environment.

Practitioners are making links between the observations and assessments they carry out to monitor children's progress sufficiently to plan for extending their various abilities. For example, learning outcomes are identified on the daily focused activity sheets, with comments written showing children's progression. Observation and assessment of learning is starting to be linked to the stepping stones. Over time, it will become more effective in identifying the next steps for individual children and, therefore, more effective in extending children's individual learning. The continuous provision method of providing for all the different learning areas that children

need to be exposed to, gives them opportunities to learn at their own rate and use their own learning style.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children are learning about their own community and other cultures as they engage in activities that promote their understanding. They enjoy celebrating festivals from their own and other religions, such as Divali, when they created colourful rangoli designs after looking at some pictures in a book. Positive images of people's differences and similarities are displayed and reflected in play resources so children can incorporate these elements into their free play as they gain understanding about the world they live in. They enthusiastically play together and learn to share and wait their turn to pour their drink of water at snack time. Children learn about their immediate environment as they observe outside rural life, watching birds such as peacocks and peahens in the adjacent field.

Children show good care and concern for others. They understand what friendship means and how they can support each other, as practitioners guide their interactions. For example, pre-school children help each other when they engage in whole group activities, as they carry and position the large cardboard boxes to create their structures. They behave very well and imitate good role modelling by practitioners who readily praise children and support them as they come to learn about how their behaviour can affect others. Children chat socially together, discuss and laugh out loud as they gather together at lunch and snack times or for planned group activities. Children can relax and look at books or listen to music tapes, so they can feel refreshed and able to gain maximum benefit from the afternoon's activities. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers in relation to the nursery education is satisfactory. Children settle well into the nursery as practitioners ensure that they have detailed information from parents or carers about every child. Practitioners take time to discuss all aspects of nursery life with parents and carers from the outset. They share information about the setting and invite parents and carers to come into nursery any time they like to discuss their child's progress and look at their record of achievement folders. For all children, the key workers communicate daily using both verbal and written means. Children are supported well as they settle into the setting, encouraged by practitioners' friendly and sound approach to partnership. Children's activities and learning experiences are shared through regular newsletters and individual reports on progress and periodic open events. Children love to take their work home each day to share with their family members and are proud to talk about their work, that is prolifically displayed on the walls. As a result, children's confidence and self-esteem are boosted.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Practitioners ensure children are supervised effectively, giving them opportunities to explore the various areas within their group environment. The staff team are all aware of their roles and responsibilities, which contributes to the smooth running of the setting. Daily interaction and discussions between practitioners positively help to build a motivated team. This results in children receiving levels of care and education that positively affect their overall development and enjoyment. Training is identified for individual practitioners that take into account the age range of children for whom the setting provides. Training relating to the 'Birth to three matters'

framework and Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage, for example, are identified as key to developing a skilled team of childcare professionals. Children thus benefit from practitioners' improved knowledge, so their care and learning experiences are enriched. All practitioners work well together as a team and organise the environment effectively. They plan a variety of activities both indoors and outside, which children find fun and exciting. Children, therefore, are eager to attend and settle well into their play as soon as they arrive for each session.

Documentation is generally well maintained and reviewed regularly. However, some omissions in staff records require attention and the availability of some staff and committee members' details were not readily available. The attendance register does not include required information about times of arrival and departure. This is a breach of requirements of registration. The operational plan is detailed and made available to parents and visitors to the setting. Precise attention is paid at every session to monitoring children's movements within the nursery areas, as well as the admission of any visitors. As a result, children's care and well-being are very effectively maintained.

The leadership and management of the setting are satisfactory. The staff team are being led by a committed management team. The whole staff team work well together and reinforce each other's strengths in their different roles. Practitioners are supported well and their training needs are accommodated to both fulfil their individual areas of interest and also to improve outcomes for children. There is clear direction day-to-day, as well as the planned future developments that are being implemented, ultimately benefiting all children who attend. The joint leaders monitor the delivery of the learning plans and oversee the observations and records that key workers complete. This area requires development, as practitioners become more familiar with linking planning to observation of children's progress and, therefore, individual children's learning needs can be better met.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection of care, recommendations were made to extend children's imaginative play opportunities and for them to have access to information technology equipment.

Both of these areas have been improved, so children have chances to play imaginatively in the home corner and with dressing-up clothes. A computer, tape recorders and programmable toys allow children to learn about, and become proficient with, different technologies.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since registration 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 complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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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):

- ensure that all suitability evidence for staff and volunteers is recorded consistently and is readily available for inspection
- maintain accurate registers of children's attendance, showing their times of arrival and departure
- ensure that the outdoor school play area is secure and children cannot leave unsupervised.

#### 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):

- continue to develop children's assessment records so that planning for their continued learning and progress along the stepping stones clearly identifies their next steps towards achieving the early learning goals
- ensure that more able children are challenged and their individual learning needs are met so they can make progress.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)