

# Buffer Bear Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique Reference Number** 150720  
**Inspection date** 06 June 2007  
**Inspector** Timothy Butcher

**Setting Address** British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, Clock Tower Yard, Temple Meads, Bristol, Avon, BS1 6QH

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**Registered person** Buffer Bear 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](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 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?

Buffer Bear operates a network of childcare nurseries around the United Kingdom. This Buffer Bear Nursery opened in January 2001. It operates from the ground floor of the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum adjacent to Temple Meads train station in Bristol.

There are currently 72 children from three months to five years on roll. This includes 30 funded three and four year olds. Children attend for full day care or a variety of sessions.

The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children for whom English is an additional language.

The nursery opens five days a week from 8.00 to 18.00, excluding bank holidays and two staff training days.

There are 15 full-time and four part-time staff who work with the children. Over half of the staff are qualified to Level 2 or 3. The organisation employs its own teachers who regularly visit to support staff.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is satisfactorily promoted because procedures and practices are in place to meet their individual physical, nutritional and health needs. Young children and babies are well cared for by staff who consult closely with parents and carers. Effective hygiene procedures are used when nappies are changed and staff ensure that children are kept comfortable and relaxed. Younger children are supported as they learn potty-training skills. Children over two years develop their self-care skills as staff are usually well-organised to provide appropriate support to children, where needed. Staff sometimes revert to taking children en masse to go to the toilet and this undermines the good progress that children otherwise make in gaining independence and in self-care skills. Children are able to access tissue paper for themselves and can wipe their own noses independently, however, they are not always sufficiently encouraged to do so.

Children's health is promoted because there are clear and effective policies and procedures for dealing with accidents. There is a clear policy for the administration of medication throughout the nursery, overall children are safeguarded. Written parental permission is consistently sought and recorded in regard to consent for emergency medical advice or treatment. The majority of staff have undertaken training in first aid. This means that children are protected in the event of an accident or emergency.

Children are well protected from the spread of infection as they follow well-established hygiene procedures. They wash their hands spontaneously after messy play activities such as painting and sand play. Staff follow sensible procedures and practices which protect children from the spread of illness and risk of infection, for example, in preparation for snack-time staff wipe down tables with an anti-bacterial cleaner. However, children in the oldest age group do not always have their snacks provided on plates.

Children have their dietary needs satisfactorily met. Babies sit with their key-workers for their breakfast and are suitably helped to be fed. Children in the Koala's room are suitably supported to develop their skills in independence to feed themselves. Meals are healthy, well prepared and nutritious. There is a six week menu on display. Staff have a clear understanding of children's individual dietary preferences and allergies. There is a list of dietary needs in the kitchen and plates have a colour coding system to ensure that children are suitably provided for. Children enjoy being social at mealtimes. They sit with staff at tables and talk in a relaxed atmosphere with staff and each other. Older children gain in independence as they cut and spread their own snacks for themselves.

Information about each child's day is readily provided to parents, verbally at the point of collection and through a daily diary that provides useful information such as sleeps, feeds, nappy changes, activities and general demeanour.

Children enjoy a sound range of physical activities that contribute to their good health and help them develop control and coordination of their bodies. Regular opportunities are provided for children to play outside each day on an all-weather surface. Children in the Koala's room enjoy their own outside area in which to move and play in safety. The Panda's group clearly benefit from the social experience of being with the older children and join them for a range of activities. They move freely backwards and forwards and safely negotiate obstacles and each other when using sit-on and pedal equipment. They frequently have fun practising coordination

skills as they thoroughly enjoy the action rhymes. They sing at the top of their voices as they move to the music. Although children over three years have several opportunities to take their play outside, some of the time their play is limited by the number of resources made available until the deployment of staff is such that other resources can be accessed. When both groups are together children enjoy a wide and varied range of resources. They learn to crawl, jump and climb through tunnels and on climbing frames. They run, bunny hop, kick and throw balls with increasing skill, proudly showing others what they can do. The planning for children's physical development provides sufficient opportunities for children to be active.

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

The provision is good.

Children have a very safe environment in which to play. The provider has carried out a thorough risk assessment of the premises and has effective control measures in place to reduce the risk of accidental injury to children. The premises are secure and access to the building is very closely monitored. Smoke detection equipment is in place and rooms have safety gates to protect children from straying away from areas unsupervised. Staff are vigilant in the supervision of children at all times and prompt children to follow basic safety rules. Children learn to have a regard for their own safety and that of others. Children enjoy using the climbing frame and slide. Staff are at hand to prompt children to remember that they should take turns to use the slide and wait for each other to be out of the way before starting their descent.

Children benefit from the outside play areas that are spacious and have safety surfacing. They are generally well-equipped and secure. Children strongly benefit from the attractive and child-friendly surroundings that staff have established. Space is organised well to create a welcoming and stimulating learning environment for all children. This significantly contributes to children's enjoyment and learning. Rooms are very appropriately laid out for their purpose, for children under three. Each room, for example, has toy and resource trays that are shallow and at low level. This effectively supports children to exercise choice. Children are provided with a good variety of resources that cover each of their development. Babies have plenty of toys made from both manufactured and natural resources that they explore with all their senses. Children within the Koala's room clearly enjoy exploring in the sensory area and make good use of the book, musical and creative resources. The Big Bear's room is set out into defined areas to cover each area of learning of the Foundation Stage curriculum and, with the exception of information technology and some mathematical resources, have some good quality resources. Some resources are shared between rooms, for example, some construction materials so as to provide children with greater choice.

Children have their welfare safeguarded because staff have a clear awareness of their responsibilities in regard to the protection of children and a sound understanding of the possible signs and symptoms of potential abuse.

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

The provision is good.

Staff have a very solid knowledge of the Birth to three matters framework and overall effectively plan for children's development. Specifically planned observations, by the child's 'Key Person', are regularly made of children's achievements. These inform the forward planning process. Spontaneous observations that mark what a child does that stands out are also contribute to the planning process. There is some delay and inconsistency in the recording of some

spontaneous observations and this makes the information gathered less immediate, when planning for children's next steps in development.

Babies and children under three make good progress in all areas, given their starting points. All babies and children are well cared for by a skilled and committed staff team who provide good learning experiences for children in play environments that are often vibrant. Staff carefully plan the environment to enable children to access resources and make independent decisions about their own learning. Babies have plenty of opportunity to gain confidence in bearing weight, for example, and pull themselves up to discover a different perspective on their world. They are encouraged to do so by staff who understand how babies learn and how to support development through a range of sensory play and stimuli. Babies experiment with different objects in their treasure baskets and manipulate shapes and musical toys. They begin to learn to make marks from an early age, as they are given paper on which to scribble with coloured crayons.

Young children and toddlers in the Koala's room enjoy the many opportunities to be creative. They scream with delight at the water table as they pour, splash and fill containers. They enjoy such things as messy play, colour play and construction blocks. Children in the Panda's room also become thoroughly immersed with water play. They carefully smooth the toy alligator's rough skin with wet fingers and engage their imaginations as they talk about the other sea creatures they play with. They eagerly fetch towels to gently wipe and dry the alligator. All enjoy the warm interaction with staff who have close relationships with children and spend much time talking, listening and playing with them. They also explore a good range of textures and materials, such as flour and water, jelly and paint. The home corner is set out for role-play and although children freely use the props and dressing up materials to engage their imaginations, more creative role-play situations that provide rich experiences for children are less in evidence. Children have many opportunities to make marks and to develop writing skills.

All children and parents are warmly welcomed to the setting. Children are eager to attend and thoroughly enjoy their time at the nursery. Introductions are usually planned well to allow children to settle easily. Children are happy and relaxed. Some parents have commented positively on the transitions process between rooms for children. They appreciate the support given to help settle children and comment that there is good communication with staff. Children receive lots of physical contact and cuddles as routine. The sensitive staff are generally alert to the needs of children.

#### Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children make at least satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals in all six areas of learning. The staff often use their skills effectively, to ask questions of children and to extend children's thinking. Teaching is mostly rooted in a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Written observations of children's achievements are well recorded. Planned weekly observations of children's progress have been a little disrupted at times, however, measures to address this are in hand. Children's individual learning profiles indicate some weaknesses in some spontaneous observations of children and a corresponding gap in the currency of information. Staff use the records of all observations to plan individual learning targets for children's next steps in development.

Children have good attitudes to learning. They are enthusiastic and often fully involved in a broad range of sometimes exciting and generally developmentally appropriate activities that catch their imaginations and capture their interest. Staff provide sufficient levels of interaction

to provide children with suitable challenge that is at times good. They sometimes use open-ended questions to extend the learning and to stimulate children's thinking. There is a strong focus on child-initiated play and children have sufficient opportunities to practise their developing skills through targeted free-flow activities. As a result children are motivated, have their interest maintained and explore at their own pace.

All children are encouraged to speak and to listen in the both small and large group situations. Those less confident are suitably helped to contribute and have their contribution acknowledged. Children grow in confidence and make solid progress with their language skills.

Children are developing their literacy skills and making at least satisfactory progress. Children are encouraged to label their own pictures and most children competently recognise their own names. At snack time they have their own place and cups labelled with their name that they recognise. Children enjoy stories and some spontaneously select books and sit quietly to look at them. In story-time a child spontaneously talks of the pictures that she recognises from the book that is being held up and read. Staff skilfully ask some questions to get children to think and to predict. They sometimes leave sentences and words unfinished for children to fill in.

Children have fun counting fingers and each other. Some children use spontaneous mathematical language in play such as 'taller and smaller' when using construction blocks. Some can count competently and do some simple calculation when asked. However, the mathematical area has some limited resources and children are not as avidly attracted to it, at present, as they are to more creatively presented areas. A few children are skilful at using some simple computer programs. Children have limited access to a wider range of technology equipment. Calculators are stored aside the mathematics table but they are not put out for use in other areas for children to make meaningful use of them, for example, in the role-play corner. As a result children's learning is not maximised in the areas of information and communication technology and in mathematics.

Children are making sound progress in their creative development. They have sound opportunities to express themselves creatively because they explore a wide range of materials, such as paint, sand and play dough. Creative activities are available in some form on a daily basis. Children have fun as they manipulate big and small brushes and wooden pegs, with sticky paint on large sheets of paper. A child engages her imagination and makes 'toast and cheese' from play dough. She uses tools to roll out and cut a small piece carefully with a knife practising her coordination and small muscle control as she does so.

Children learn about the wider world. For example, in a planned and adult-led activity children discuss what they would need to live on an island with buried treasure. They are skilfully drawn in by the member of staff to develop their ideas to think about the sorts of things they would want and the practical implications of the resources they would need. Parents and carers have access to information about the progress of their child. Parents have some opportunities to be active in their children's learning.

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

The provision is good.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. A prospectus gives clear information about the setting and some of its policies and procedures. There is clear additional information about the Birth to three matters framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum. News letters and wipe boards in the different rooms, also provide useful information for parents and carers. They

are closely consulted about the individual and every day care needs of children and routine discussions take place at collection and arrival, usually with the 'Key' member of staff. A daily diary provides useful information. This contributes to the continuity of care for children as information is shared on a daily basis. Parents report positively on the approachability of the staff, the good care provided to children in general and the good range of activities that children experiences. Some parents have commented less favourably on some disruption to care following some changes in staffing. Others comment positively on the staff's good interaction with children describing the care as 'brilliant'. There is a procedure for the recording of complaint.

An inclusive approach is fully promoted throughout the nursery. Children with learning difficulties and/or disability have their needs closely met as staff work very constructively to carry through individual education plans. They work in close partnership with parents and carers and with the other professional involved. Staff have a clear awareness of the strategies to support children and information is readily shared between staff.

Staff have a positive approach to the management of behaviour. Children are well behaved overall and develop caring and cooperative relationships with staff and each other. Staff provide good role models for children. They have high expectations of them and provide consistent boundaries. Children are well supported to resolve issues through staff intervention but as yet have fewer opportunities to learn and to practise the skills to problem-solve for themselves. Children routinely learn to share and take turns in a host of activities throughout the day.

Children and parents are treated with respect. Staff offer children choice and provide plenty of praise and encouragement. As a result children grow in confidence and are helped to feel positive about themselves. Some planned activities successfully introduce children to the wider world and to different cultures. Children enjoy celebrating festivals from their own and others' religions and cultures and learn that people who are different are equally valued. They also learn about diversity through the positive images they encounter when using an adequate range of multi-cultural resources including dressing up materials, toys and books. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children play in an organised environment where time, space and resources are used effectively, to offer them a wide variety of experiences. All legally required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place and is regularly reviewed. The key worker system and grouping of children provides children with optimal sized groups in which to flourish. Staff are deployed satisfactorily well within the setting, so children receive appropriate adult attention. Changes in staff deployment for children in receipt of nursery education has led to some recent disruption in teaching and learning.

The leadership and management is satisfactory. The manager has a good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and is proactive in providing continuous improvement, for example, through the wider organisations quality assurance scheme and through the commitment to staff training. A small gap exists between the identification of good practice within the nursery and the consistency with which it is implemented, for example, in regard to the progress that older children make in gaining in independence and self-care skills.

Staff have a very solid knowledge of the Birth to three matters framework and overall effectively plan for children's development. Teaching for children over three years is mostly rooted in a

secure understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. The process for planning for children's immediate next steps in development requires some further fine-tuning. There is, at times, good communication between staff within each room. The skilled staff teams have a clear understanding of the planning and evaluating activities within their own designated areas of responsibility. As a result children under three make good progress and children over three make at least satisfactory progress in their development. Children are eager to attend and thoroughly enjoy their time at the nursery. The provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

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

At the last care inspection it was agreed that improvements would be made to the training of staff in regard to those looking after babies, the record of medication given to children, the rigour of staff vetting procedures and the sufficiency of play materials.

Since the last care inspection the provider has put in place a robust vetting procedure that ensures all staff undergo suitable checks as part of the recruitment and induction processes adopted by the wider organisation. Children are potentially better safeguarded as a result. The nursery has provided training to room leaders and other staff so that both rooms, with children under two years, have suitably qualified staff with specific training in the care of babies. The nursery has introduced the Birth to three matters framework format to planning. As a result the care for babies and young children has improved. The record of medication now routinely carries the times that medication is given. As a result children are better cared for should they require medication to be administered. The provider has increased the toy and other resources in each of the rooms. The provider has implemented a replace and renew policy. With the exception of the mathematical and information technology resources for the Big Bear's room, resources are now sufficient to meet the needs of children.

At the last inspection of Nursery Education it was agreed that staff's knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage would be increased so that activities are linked to the early learning goals, carry sufficient challenge for children across each area of learning and planning and evaluation is improved. It was further agreed that more information for parents would be provided about the Early Learning Goals and ways for parents to contribute to their children's learning would be introduced.

Since the last inspection of Nursery Education the provider has developed the staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. A new planning and evaluation system has been introduced. A format of planned observations is used to support the information gathering process and learning profile. Although the overall system is becoming embedded, planned observations are not yet always consistently carried through and the use of spontaneous observations has inconsistencies. Planning is comprehensive and links to the stepping stones and the learning intentions of activities are identified.

Parents and carers are provided with good information about the Foundation Stage curriculum, the six areas of learning and the learning goals. They are asked to contribute to their child's learning profile, however, further ways for parents to contribute to their child's learning and assessment have yet to be developed further.

### **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 complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

## **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 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 further children's independence and self care skills in regard to going to the toilet and in regard to personal hygiene for children over two years
- evaluate and maintain children's assessment and development records to ensure that they are used to inform the planning of children's future learning and to provide appropriate challenges for children

#### **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):

- develop further resources that support children's use of information and communication technology and mathematics
- improve opportunities for children to explore information and communication technology and mathematics independently and with suitable challenge

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)