

Brown Bear at The Mill

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number EY281133

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Inspector Jeanne Lesley Walsh

Setting Address Unit CG2, Houldsworth Mill, Houldsworth Street, Stockport, Cheshire,
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Telephone number

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Registered person Brown Bear Childcare 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?

Brown Bear at The Mill is a Neighbourhood Nursery run by Brown Bear Childcare Limited. It has been registered since February 2004. The nursery operates from a ground floor unit, within Houldsworth Mill, in the Reddish area of Stockport, serving families from the local area. Children are grouped according to their ages and stages of development, within three playrooms and with access to a bathroom area. There is access to an enclosed outdoor play area and children are taken on visits to local parks with parental consent.

The nursery opens five days a week, all year round, except for a week during the Christmas period and all bank holidays. Opening times are from 08.00 until 18.00. There are currently 39 children on roll, who attend the nursery for a variety of sessions. Of these, eight receive funding for nursery education. The nursery supports children who speak English as a second language and children with learning difficulties and disability.

The nursery employs 10 members of staff who work directly with the children. Of these, seven are appropriately qualified and three staff are working towards a suitable early years childcare

qualification. The provision gains support from Stockport Sure Start and is a member of the National Day Nursery Association and the Pre-School Network.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in an environment where healthy eating is well promoted. They are starting to learn about healthy foods through the healthy meal and snack menus. Their individual dietary needs are discussed with the parents to establish any allergies or specific likes and dislikes and children are provided with food according to their needs. Posters display pictures of fresh fruits and vegetables and children are encouraged to freely help themselves to the fresh drinking water from the water fountain. They are involved in colouring activities and role play that includes the use of a variety of play foods. The staff remind the children which foods are good for them as they pretend to cook the tea and choose what foods they will put on the plate. They also take part in community projects in conjunction with their parents, such as 'Healthy Body Happy Me week,' to help them to begin to understand their bodies.

Meals and snack-time for older children are organised as a social occasion where independence and positive social skills are fostered. The children collect their own name card and place it on the table where they want to sit. Some choose to sit next to their friend and others sit on their favourite coloured chair. The children take turns to be a special helper and assist with setting the tables, and all the children sing their thank you song before they eat. The staff also follow good routines, such as nursing babies while bottle feeding and encouraging parents to prepare their bottles. At mealtime some babies sit in high chairs and others sit safely at small tables, as they begin to develop independent feeding and social skills. Staff are always on hand offering help and encouragement. Staff also seek professional advice to keep up to date with new health information to ensure best practice to protect babies.

The children are cared for in a clean and well maintained setting where they are starting to learn the importance of personal care. They wash their hands before touching foods, after visiting the toilet and at other appropriate times of the day. Pictures above the sinks remind the children how to clean their teeth, brush their hair and wash their hands and they sing their washing hands song. They help themselves to the tissues to blow their noses and they know that they must place the dirty tissue in the bin. Children do this without prompting. Effective nappy changing procedures also ensure that the risk of cross-infection is minimised. Staff also work closely with parents to provide consistency with potty training and they willingly follow home routines if parents wish.

Children are protected because there is a sick children policy in place. Staff have discussions with parents to inform them of children's individual health needs. They also obtain consent from parents to seek any emergency advice or treatment that may be required. The procedures for recording the administration of medication are well maintained and shared with parents. However, forms are sometimes pinned on boards for reference, which means they are not always kept confidentially. Several members of staff hold a current first aid certificate, which ensures children's well-being in the event of an accident. Accident records are recorded and are signed by parents but they do not consistently detail the location of the injury for parents' information.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children are cared for in a warm, friendly and welcoming environment. The space available is well organised into three distinct areas so that children of all ages can move around freely, safely and comfortably. Walls are bright and cheerful with posters, information, photographs and children's work, giving them a strong sense of belonging in the setting. A wide range of good quality toys and equipment is available and these are checked daily for safety. Low-level storage and low-level tables and chairs ensure that children have easy access to activities, which positively promotes their independence and choice. Children also have access to a fully enclosed outdoor play area.

Regular risk assessments, which are linked to the National Standards, ensure the safety of all play areas for children, both inside and out. The emergency evacuation procedure is displayed and the children are becoming aware of fire safety as they take part in fire drills, which are carried out and recorded at least monthly. There is also a fire evacuation trolley provided especially for the protection of babies. Good security in the setting ensures children's safety. Some doors are alarmed so that nobody can enter or leave the premises without staff knowledge and all visitors sign the visitors' book. Children are learning about safety in the setting because they know, for example, that they must walk closely together as they make their way to the outdoor play area, which is some distance from the nursery door. They are also beginning to learn about people who help us and keep us safe through visits and activities. Their large wall display introduces the crossing patrol lady, the fire officer, policeman and the ambulance services, amongst others. Books, role play, jigsaw puzzles and puppets are used to support and extend children's learning. The small world play people also give the children constant reminders about staying safe.

Children's safety is well protected because the staff demonstrate a clear understanding of their responsibility regarding child protection issues. There is a child protection policy available, which is shared with parents. All staff have completed in-house training and some staff have completed Local Safeguarding Children Board's training. Discussion with staff confirms that they all have a sound knowledge of the appropriate procedures to follow, should they have any concerns. They demonstrate a good awareness of possible signs and symptoms of abuse and they are aware of the need for confidentiality. There is also a designated person available to liaise with child protection agencies and Ofsted, should this be required.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children are happy and familiar with the routine as they confidently enter the nursery and wave goodbye to their parents. The staff show awareness of their individual needs and give the children time and attention in order to ensure their needs are met. Children are free to choose what they wish to play with and opportunities are varied throughout the session. They develop their imagination as they initiate their own play. In the hospital corner the children read their book, which they say has the names of all the people who come to the hospital. They tell the inspector that they are looking after the poorly children and as they seek out the stethoscope they say 'this is very cold you know'. They are busy ironing the nurses' uniforms ready for everyone to wear and they want to know where the proper ironing board is. Notices and posters displayed show how their body works and they have made simple blood pressure charts. The children are busy and they are co-operating with each other as they decide together what they will do next.

The babies explore a bright, stimulating environment, which offers activities that are linked to the 'Birth to three matters' framework. The bright displays in the baby room capture the children's imagination as they look at the jungle, the animal prints and life under the sea. They are fascinated as they pull themselves up and see their image in the mirror on the wall. They roll on the floor and become excited as they shake the rainmaker and they listen to the noise it makes. They confidently cuddle up to staff and listen to what they say responding with smiles and waves, followed by familiar but unrecognisable baby talk. The photograph gallery shows them chalking on the blackboard, attempting simple jigsaw puzzles, exploring the water play and riding the wheeled toys. There are opportunities for babies to develop their sensory play as they examine the contents of the treasure baskets and explore different textures and smells.

The children are happy as they chat and sing while they play. There is good interaction by the staff who support their play by explaining what they are doing. They extend children's learning and widen their vocabulary by asking questions and answering questions. The staff have time for the children, they listen to them and they encourage them and the children respond positively. A group of children excitedly shake their plastic bottles filled with lentils and pasta. The staff member encourages them to shake them loud and then tells them to shake them quietly, reminding them that this means you have to shake them gently. The children respond to the enthusiasm shown by the staff and they all enjoy their music activities. They have many musical instruments from around the world and at different times of the day they listen to different types of music playing in the background, which helps to promote a relaxed atmosphere and develop children's creative imagination. Time for exercise and outdoor play is planned into the children's day, however, staff do not constructively plan what they will do, which means children's outdoor activities are not always purposeful.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The children benefit from choosing from a range of resources that are freely available in dedicated learning areas. Staff demonstrate some awareness of the Foundation Stage curriculum, although they do not have the training or experience. Most of the activities provided are linked to the learning areas. Long, medium and short term planning, with a topic approach, is available and is followed. There is no key worker system in operation at the moment although observations on individual children are kept and recorded. However, these are not used effectively to inform the planning, which means that the children's individual needs are not necessarily being met nor are the next steps being planned for.

There are many opportunities in the setting for children to learn that print carries meaning. They become absorbed in a group story time as they listen carefully and join in by asking questions and looking closely at the pictures. The member of staff patiently answers them, which helps to enhance the children's wonder and enjoyment of the activity. Another group of children are attracted to the reading books set out on top of the light box. They are fascinated as they curiously search the pages and talk about what they see. A member of staff supports and extends their learning by asking and answering questions and listening to the children. The children have made their own display of some of their favourite stories, such as the story of the three bears and the giant red bus related to the song. They are also beginning to recognise their own names as they find their name card on arrival and put it on the table to reserve their place ready for their snack. However, there are very few opportunities available for children to practise and develop their writing skills.

Opportunities for children to learn about numbers are many throughout the daily routine. They take part in number and action rhymes and count the number line with corresponding healthy foods, such as five bananas and three carrots. They balance the number block tower and count how many children are sitting at the table. Numbers are displayed around the nursery as well as posters helping them to understand opposites like high and low, long and short and full and empty. The children talk about size as they play with the cars and they want to know if it is a big car or a small car. Some children are starting to learn about the time as they paint paper plates with a clock face on it. Children are also becoming familiar with the use of computers, tapes and discs in the setting.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are learning about difference and the wider world through a range of resources and activities that raise awareness of anti-discriminatory practice including puppets, books and role play. They celebrate different religious and cultural festivals, such as Diwali and children's birthdays. Notices are displayed in different languages and posters remind visitors that 'Everyone Matters'. At circle time the children sing and sign their good morning song and they say good morning to each other, making sure they do not leave anybody out, including their visitors. Discussion with parents regarding children's individual needs is recorded to make sure that these are appropriately met. The children are starting to learn to think about others as they take part in a pyjama party to raise money for 'Children in Need'. They all arrive at nursery dressed in their pyjamas and enjoy a fun packed day. They also enjoy taking 'Barnaby Bear' home or on holiday and they keep a diary of his activities to share with the children back at the nursery. This is a lovely way of giving children responsibility, sharing activities with parents and establishing stronger links between home and nursery.

The setting provides well for children with learning difficulties and disability. Staff work closely with parents to help to meet the individual needs of all the children. They are effective in their observations of children and they note and act on any concerns, which results in children receiving good support and care from nursery staff and other agencies where appropriate.

Children behave well in the setting. They receive positive praise and encouragement throughout the session, which boosts their self-esteem and gives them confidence. The staff are positive role models for the children, setting good examples by speaking kindly and being gentle with them. Good behaviour is rewarded with lots of praise and encouragement and good use is made of sticker charts. Children may also receive a 'little star' award to take home, which informs parents that they have behaved well and encourages them to praise their children and celebrate their achievements. This also helps to boost children's self-esteem. Children are encouraged to be kind and to respect each other by sharing their toys and helping each other in their play and to consider each other's feelings. They are happy and they know the rules, which are displayed in writing and supported by pictures. If any concerns about children's behaviour do arise then staff work closely with parents to agree a consistent approach to its management. The children are cared for in a positive environment where they are confident, happy and secure. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. The parents receive good information and support from staff including policies, procedures and information about current topics, so that parents can continue or extend activities at home if they wish. Staff also include parents in different projects and recently a 'Dad's and Lad's project', which was organised in conjunction with the library service and was an effort to increase attainment for boys in communication

language and literacy. It was intended to identify positive male role models for the children and several dads took part. All parents are welcomed and supported in the setting and daily discussion is encouraged with the staff. Daily written reports are shared with parents for babies. The staff are organising open days more frequently and generally good relationships are being developed. Parents are aware of how to make a complaint and there are effective procedures in place to deal with any concerns.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a positive and supportive environment, which effectively promotes their individual care needs. The setting offers a warm and welcoming atmosphere where children can progress at their own pace. Clearly defined areas separate the different activities and all staff work directly with the children. Children are encouraged to make choices, think for themselves and they are helped to achieve.

Appropriate records are well maintained and a set of policies and procedures help to support the smooth running of the setting. Clear recruitment and selection procedures are in place. These are followed by suitable vetting procedures, induction training and regular appraisals for all staff members. Regular staff meetings take place and systems are in place to ensure that all staff are updated daily with any issues that may have arisen. The manager ensures that the staff are clear about their individual role within the setting. Several staff members are newly appointed and lack experience. However, systems are already in place to help with team building, staff training and confidence.

The leadership and management of nursery education is satisfactory. Only the manager has completed the Foundation Stage curriculum training and she is well aware of the inexperience of some of her staff. However, she shows concern about the current situation and in order to support the new staff team they have appointed a senior lead practitioner, whose role will be help with continuity in practice and a mentor to support staff with training. The nursery also receives support from an advisory teacher. This will also assist them with the re-introduction of the key worker system, which is not currently functioning. 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 the staff were asked to continue to develop resources available to children, extend the range of toys and equipment that reflect positive images of diversity and provide resources in natural materials for babies. They were also asked to request written permission from parents to seek emergency medical advice or treatment.

The nursery has now built up a good range of toys and activities, such as books, jigsaw puzzles, puppets and dressing-up clothes and they celebrate different festivals that help to raise children's awareness of positive images and diversity. They also provide treasure baskets, sensory activities and natural materials for babies to explore. The children's information form now includes written consent from parents for staff to obtain emergency medical advice or treatment for children if necessary.

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 complaint 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):

- plan and organise purposeful activities for children's outdoor play (this also applies to nursery education)
- ensure that accident records contain consistent information for parents and maintain confidentiality in relation to medical information.

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):

- extend activities to increase children's opportunities to experiment with writing through mark making
- develop procedures to ensure that all children's individual needs are met in conjunction with the Foundation Stage curriculum and develop staff's individual awareness of how to assess children's achievements, using observations to decide on the next steps in their learning.

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