

# Oscar Bears Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	301671
<b>Inspection date</b>	13 September 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Susan Elaine Heap
<b>Setting Address</b>	Pleasington Street, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB2 1UF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01254 693 775
<b>E-mail</b>	tonystansfield@rasle.co.uk
<b>Registered person</b>	Bicentennia Ltd
<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?

Oscar Bears Nursery is one of two nurseries run by Bicentennia Limited. It opened in 1993 and operates from five rooms in a converted building. It is situated close to Blackburn town centre. A maximum of 48 children may attend at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 all year round except for Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day. All children have access to an enclosed play area.

There are currently 36 children aged from four months to under five years on roll. Of these, 12 children receive funding for early education.

The nursery employs nine members of staff. Of these, eight hold appropriate early years qualifications.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are learning about simple health and hygiene practices as part of the daily routine, such as washing their hands after using the bathroom and before eating their lunch. Most staff are active in wiping children's noses, however, not all the staff give explanations to children and show them what to do. As a result, children are not fully developing independence and self-care skills. Staff follow the written policies and procedures which help maintain a clean environment and protect children from cross infection. For example, floors are swept and mopped after lunch, tables are wiped with antibacterial spray and staff wear protective aprons when serving food. The arrangements to care for children in the case of accidents and the administration of medication are sound as all staff have current first aid certificates. Children's home routines are followed for rest and sleep which ensures consistency of care and that their individual needs are met. For example, some children prefer to have their own blanket from home.

Children's individual dietary needs are met through discussions with parents and all food, apart from milk formula, is supplied by the nursery. A new cook has recently been employed and, as a result, menus have been revised and clearly show how many portions of fruit and vegetables children have each day. Food is made from fresh ingredients which means that children have healthy, nutritious meals. Children enjoy eating homemade quiche, salad and new potatoes and younger children explore the texture of the chicken in a leek, bean and chicken bake. They are learning the effect exercise has on their bodies because staff give explanations. For example, when children come in from playing outside they say 'I'm thirsty'. A member of staff explains that they need a drink because they have been running around outside. However, the drinking water tray is not positioned in clear view of children and so does not prompt them to access water independently.

All children have access to fresh air and exercise as this is satisfactorily planned into the daily routine, both in the morning and the afternoon. They enjoy painting the fence panels using water and paint brushes and younger children enjoy crawling on the grass or riding on sit and ride toys. Older children play cooperatively together as one child pedals the trike while another stands on the back. They enjoy joining in music and movement sessions where they move fast and slow, reach high and low or crawl on the floor. All these are enjoyable and contribute to children's health and physical development.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are developing a sense of belonging within the setting as they receive a warm greeting from staff when they arrive and photographs of them at play are displayed on the walls. Playrooms are suitably organised to meet the needs of the different age groups of children attending the setting. For example, there are areas for messy play and quiet play in each room. They have access to a sufficient range of toys and equipment which is safe and clean and there is a good range of topic books, dressing up clothes and hand puppets for preschool children.

Some policies and procedures for safety work effectively to protect children from harm. For example, fire drills are practised monthly and sleeping children are monitored and checked every fifteen minutes. Monthly risk assessments of the whole premises, both indoors and

outdoors, are completed and recorded monthly. However, records show that the large outdoor play area is subject to vandalism and outstanding maintenance needs to be completed before children are able to use this area. Children are learning to keep themselves safe through their discussions and activities with the staff, such as visits from the police, fire brigade or road safety unit. Most staff give explanations about not running in the room because the floor is still wet after being mopped.

Children are protected well because all staff have attended training on child protection. They know and understand to report any concerns to the designated person within the setting. She equally understands her responsibility in ensuring child protection concerns are dealt with promptly and reported to the appropriate agency.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and confident in the setting and have developed good relationships with the staff and each other. Children benefit from having close supportive relationships with staff. They make their needs known as they seek an adult knee for a cuddle when they are tired or tell a member of staff when they want to go to the toilet. Even the youngest children who have been attending for a short time respond to the smiles and voice of a familiar adult. All children have access to a suitable range of resources and experiences which they are interested in and which offers them a broad and balanced curriculum. They benefit from many sensory experiences, such as exploring shaving foam, cooked pasta, and cornflour and water. However, younger children have few opportunities to play with natural materials, such as wood, metal or fabrics with different textures.

The planning of activities for both the under two's and over two's has recently been revised and, as a result, staff are not fully confident in their knowledge and delivery of this. This needs to be developed further to ensure that the observations and evaluations of activities are securely linked to children's individual development needs and are used to plan the next steps in their learning. The staff work at children's level at all times either by sitting with them on the floor or at table activities. However, some staff do not always engage children in conversation or ask questions to develop their language and help them learn.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children settle well and enjoy their time in the nursery. They receive satisfactory levels of support and are encouraged to speak and share their experiences during circle time. Recent changes in the deployment of staff means that not all staff are fully confident in their roles as educators as not all of them have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum. This sometimes prevents them from extending children's learning and thinking through purposeful questioning and challenge. Planning and assessment systems are in place and sufficiently cover the six areas of learning. Staff make good observations of children's play and link these to children's individual development records. However, these are not securely linked to the stepping stones for the Foundation Stage. Sometimes, activities are introduced which link to the current theme but are not in the planning and are not always evaluated. As a result, there are some gaps in children's learning as this is not monitored effectively.

Children are making sound progress towards the Early Learning goals. They enter the setting confidently and quickly settle into the familiar routine. They have some opportunities to develop

their independence as they choose from the range of activities on offer or hang their coats on their pegs as they come in from playing outside. Children are developing confidence and self-esteem as they are praised for helping one another or choosing a favourite song to sing using the microphone. They enjoy listening to stories and sit quietly on the mat and join in the repetitive parts, such as 'ladybird, ladybird'. They enjoy looking at books and reading stories and are beginning to recognise that print carries meaning. For example, children select a favourite book, and sit in the 'teacher's' chair as they carefully turn the pages and point to the words, then 'read' to a group of children sitting on the floor.

Children have some opportunities to use mathematics in their play, such as joining in number songs or counting how many tadpoles and caterpillars there are. However, they are not always encouraged to solve simple problems in every day situations, such as how many children are present or how many cups, knives, forks and spoons are needed at lunchtime. They use mathematical language when playing with the bricks, such as counting one to nine, deciding which tower is bigger or smaller or which brick is round or square.

Children show interest and curiosity in the natural world by using facial expressions and language, as the snail they found on a mini beast hunt crawls across the table towards them. They talk about the shape, size and texture of what they have found and use their imaginations to draw their own mini beasts. However, they are not offered magnifying glasses to look at them more closely. This happens for the group of children who go on the mini beast hunt the following day. As a result, there are gaps in some children's learning and experiences. They show interest in technology when a member of staff takes a photograph of the snail with a digital camera and confidently use calculators, cash registers and telephones in their imaginative play. Children sometimes have access to computer programmes and software packages which develop their knowledge and problem solving skills, however, the computer is currently broken.

Children access a range of media, such as paint, sand, water, play dough and collage materials, and enjoy being creative and imaginative. Dressing up is a favourite activity and children enthusiastically become involved in this. They use tools and equipment which help develop their physical skills, such as pencils and paintbrushes, and some confidently use scissors as they cut out their paper shapes.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents are generally well-informed about the setting and have access to policies, procedures and newsletters. Parents' evenings are held twice a year where they receive reports on their children's progress and development. However, there are no established systems of involving parents in their children's learning or how they can extend this at home.

Children's needs are identified through the initial placement visits and are shared daily, either through babies' record sheets, or verbally with parents. Routines already established at home for young babies for eating and rest are respected. Children are valued as individuals and the staff team work closely with parents and other professionals to ensure children with additional needs are able to play an active part in the setting.

They are beginning to develop knowledge of the local and wider community through resources and books which contain positive images of race, culture and disability. This is supported through play activities and discussions with the staff, such as food tasting, celebrating different

festivals, and topics about people who help us. Each week a child takes Oscar Bear home with them and parents write in a diary what they have done together. This helps to develop links between home and the setting and children look forward to hearing of Oscar Bear's adventures at circle time.

They are developing caring relationships with the staff and are beginning to understand the needs of other children as they learn to share toys. All children behave well and respond positively to the staff's praise and encouragement. This promotes their sense of achievement. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The leadership and management of the nursery education within the setting is satisfactory. Children are cared for by a staff team who have a sound understanding of their roles and responsibilities in helping children enjoy and achieve. However, systems are not in place to monitor and evaluate the success of the provision to ensure continuous improvement.

All the legally required documentation is in place and policies and procedures generally work in practice to promote children's health, safety and welfare. The management team are currently updating these to ensure they reflect current terminology and practice; for example, the complaints and child protection procedures require minor amendments. Children are adequately protected by appropriate systems for the recruitment and vetting of staff. Staff training and development is valued and appraisals and team meetings are used to support staff. For example, all staff have attended child protection and first aid training and nearly all the staff have appropriate childcare qualifications. This contributes to the quality of children's care.

Children are settled in the nursery and are familiar with the daily routines. They have formed good relationships with the staff. This contributes to their sense of belonging and security. Staff ratios are met in each group room which means that children are satisfactorily supported in their play and learning. Overall, 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 the setting was asked to develop a range of natural resources for the under two's and develop the outside area for all children. A treasure chest was put in place for the younger children and new equipment was purchased for the outdoor area, such as sand and water trays, new bikes, hula hoops, cars and bricks. These have improved children's play experiences. However, some of the resources for the younger children have been misplaced or are well used and the outdoor area has been repeatedly vandalised. As a result, further recommendations have been made following this inspection.

## **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 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 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):

- improve the safety of the outside area and equipment
- continue to develop a range of natural materials to improve children's sensory experiences
- continue to update written policies to reflect changes to regulations, practice and terminology.

#### 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):

- improve systems for the planning and evaluation of play activities and ensure that observations of what children do are used to plan the next steps for their play, learning and development (also applies to care)
- develop systems to show how observations of children are used to monitor children's progress and securely link to the stepping stones
- develop teaching strategies by increasing staff's knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals to ensure they are able to challenge and interest children
- improve partnership with parents by developing systems to involve parents in their children's learning
- improve leadership and management within the setting by implementing a system to monitor and evaluate the success of the educational provision.

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)