

Little Bears Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY271846
Inspection date	15 January 2008
Inspector	Miriam Sheila Brown
Setting Address	Stadhampton Primary School, Cratlands Close, Stadhampton, Oxford, Oxfordshire, OX44 7XL
Telephone number	01865 400 033
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Registered person	The Trustees of Little Bears Pre-School
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 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?

Little Bears Pre-School opened in 2004. It operates from purpose built premises within the grounds of Stadhampton Primary School. The group serves the local area.

The setting is registered to care for a maximum of 15 children at any one time. There are currently 25 children on roll. Of these, 12 children receive funding for early education. The group opens five mornings a week during school terms from 09:00 until 12:00. A lunch club is available each day from 12:00 until 12:40, for all children. On Wednesdays an afternoon session for children aged over three is available from 12:00 until 15:00. Children attend for a variety of sessions throughout the week.

The pre-school employ five staff who work directly with the children; of these two staff members hold a relevant childcare qualification and one is working towards a qualification. The group receive support from the local authority Foundation Stage consultant.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy a good range of energetic physical exercise that contributes to their large and small muscle development. Throughout the year they make good use of the garden, even when the weather is bad, playing with bats and balls, wheeled toys or just enjoying muddy puddles. Children's hand-and-eye coordination is effectively supported through their play with small tools and resources such as, sand and water equipment, glue sticks, scissors, dough and table-top toys.

Snack times are organised well to encourage children in their independence and growing understanding of healthy eating habits. They sit at tables with staff and sometimes help to prepare their own snacks, for example, making sandwiches, soup or pizza. This assists in the developing their social skills, taking turns and appropriate table manners. However, although children may ask for drinks during the session, and all have a drink at snack time, fresh drinking water is not freely accessible to them.

Children are learning to understand simple good health and hygiene through well supported routines. They confidently and independently manage their personal care and staff ensure children wash their hands after visiting the toilet and before eating. Staff provide good role models to children. Tables are wiped with anti-bacterial spray and food stored and prepared safely. Staff are sympathetic and reassuring to children if they have an accident and records of these are clearly logged and shared with parents. Consent forms relating to children's health are in place and specific health needs, detailed.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are secure and well supervised within the setting. Regular and detailed risk assessments are completed which include daily visual checks of toys, equipment and premises. More detailed checks are made throughout the year which are supported by an outside agency. Security at the setting is well maintained and children's and visitors attendance logged. Regular evacuation drills are practised with children to ensure they know what to do in an emergency and parents notified that a drill has taken place, enabling them to discuss this further with their children. Children learn about keeping themselves safe because staff consistently reinforce the boundaries for safe play, for example, not running inside and holding hands when going into the main school buildings. Visitors, such as the road safety unit further support children's understanding of staying safe.

Resources and activities are set out by staff each day and offer children a variety of play options. Children move freely from one activity to another, providing them with good opportunities to make choices about their play. Toys and equipment are appropriate to the ages of children present.

All staff demonstrate through discussion and documentation, a clear understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse and the procedures to use should they have concerns. This assists in promoting and maintaining children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled in the pre-school and all leave their parents and carers happily and confidently. Staff prepare the room prior to children's arrival enabling them to go straight to their self-chosen activity. The range of toys and resources are appropriate to the ages of children present although are not always used to offer sufficient challenge for older or more able children. Staff are attentive to all children and join in with their play using good questioning to help them explore and investigate; for example, whilst choosing pictures of clothes for winter use, staff encourage them to think about the best clothes to wear for certain types of weather, such as 'wellies' for rain and gloves for the cold. Children are making positive friendships and demonstrate this through their willingness to share favourite toys and play collaboratively with each other.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Long and short term plans demonstrate that each area of learning is covered, although at present there is insufficient emphasis in some areas. Daily informal observations are used to inform planning but there is scope to improve the use of assessments to ensure children of all ages are challenged appropriately, according to their individual abilities. Staff make excellent use of a key worker system to support individual children. They all relate very well to their special member of staff, seeking them out to show their work and going to them if unhappy. Daily activities are briefly explained to children, helping them to participate in planning their play.

Children understand the routines of the session and thoroughly enjoy taking an active part in tidy-up times and handing out plates for snack time. Their concentration is growing because they are enabled to remain at activities for as long as they wish, giving them a sense of completion. Children are very independent in their personal care and proficiently wash and dry their hands, disposing of paper towels appropriately. Children are starting to recognise their name on cards at snack time but have few other opportunities to learn that print may be used for a purpose. The book area is inviting and children enjoy books, handling them with care.

Children enjoy counting each other at carpet registration time. They sing number songs as a group and use table top activities to match colours and pattern. However, number work such as, use of numerals, language used to describe and compare shape and position, and simple addition and subtraction, do not regularly form part of daily activities.

Children's understanding of the world around them is developing through play with a variety of different materials which they explore and investigate with obvious pleasure; for example, playing with coloured sand using small tools and containers, making shapes from dough and creating collage pictures with glue and various scraps of material and paper. A range of multi-cultural resources and planned topic work help to develop children's understanding of the wider community, different cultures and traditions. This is enhanced through visits to the local church and walks in the surrounding woods and countryside. Children's understanding of everyday technology is well supported through daily use of a computer and they watch with wonder as their creations are printed.

Daily opportunities to use chalks and other creative resources help children to express their feelings and emotions. They greatly enjoy role-play, acting out familiar scenes using dressing-up clothes and other props such as a telephone and a cash till. The pre-school make very good

use of their extensive outdoor area. Here children put on all weather suits and discover the pleasure of paddling and splashing in mud alongside use of a range of outdoor equipment.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Sessions are well organised and children understand daily routines, helping them to feel secure and confident. Staff manage minor incidents very effectively and consistently support all children, in particular, younger and new children to the setting. This assists in developing their understanding of appropriate behaviour. Regular, meaningful and consistent verbal praise from staff reinforces positive behaviour.

All toys and resources are equally accessible to all children and planned topic work assists in developing children's awareness of the wider world. This is supported by play with resources reflecting positive images of different cultures and lifestyles. Visits to the local church, outings in the local area and visitors to the pre-school increase children's awareness of their immediate community. Children's social, moral, cultural and spiritual development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Some information about the Foundation Stage curriculum is provided for them. However, it does not clearly explain how the stepping stones are used to identify each child's needs and help them move on to their next stage of learning. Staff organise open mornings throughout the year to inform parents about their children's development. This helps them to understand how their children learn and encourages them to be part of that process. Information regarding children's individual needs is sought at the start of attendance at the group and regularly updated with parents. Clear and detailed information about how to raise any concerns with the group or the regulator, are displayed for parents on the notice board.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. All staff are in receipt of suitable clearance and ratios are well maintained throughout each session. Organisation of the staff team, premises and resources is generally good and staff support children appropriately. Ofsted have been informed of significant changes. Policies and procedures are not currently accessible to parents as they are being updated to ensure they accurately reflect the day-to-day management of the group. Required paperwork and documentation is in place and available for inspection, including staff and children's timed attendance records and records of visitors to the premises.

Leadership and management of the group is satisfactory. The play leader and chairperson have a clear vision for the group and provide good role models for staff and committee members. Staff are supported in their ongoing training needs which are highlighted through regular staff meetings and appraisals. A detailed induction programme is in place helping to ensure that new staff are able to provide a consistent approach in line with the rest of the staff team. Planning, assessments and monitoring of the educational programme still require further development to ensure they fully meet all children's needs.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting agreed to provide children with opportunities to engage in meaningful activities to enable them to learn about a variety of cultures and festivals from around the world. The pre-school now plan activities throughout the year which support children's understanding of the wider world. These include talking about Chinese New Year, trying to eat with chopsticks and making Diwali sweets. These, and other experiences are supported by books, resources and local visits which assist in increasing children's awareness of their immediate community and the wider world.

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

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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):

- ensure policies and procedures accurately reflect the care offered and are easily accessible to parents.
- provide children with free access to fresh drinking water

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 the planning cycle to ensure that all children are challenged to move on from what they already know and can do
- create more opportunities for children to use number in their play and daily routines
- increase children's opportunities to make marks in their play to help them develop confidence and understanding that mark-making has a purpose

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