

Buffer Bear at The Queen's Hospital Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY277937
Inspection date	06 November 2007
Inspector	Christine Holmes
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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.

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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Queens Hospital Day Nursery is one of a chain of nurseries run by Buffer Bear Limited. It opened in 2004 and operates from purpose built premises. It is situated within the grounds of Queens Hospital, Burton-on-Trent. A maximum of 55 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 06:45 until 18:15 all year round. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 100 children aged from eight months to four years on roll. Of these, 16 receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area as most parents are employees of the hospital. The nursery currently supports children who speak English as an additional language and children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The nursery employs 15 staff who work with the children. All staff hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is actively and effectively promoted because staff rigorously implement current and appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines. For instance, the nursery has been awarded five stars in a recent inspection by the 'Food Safety Star Rating Scheme' for Staffordshire. There are impeccable procedures in place to minimise the risk of cross-infection. For example, there is a 'no outdoor shoe policy' in the baby and toddler room. The clear policy regarding children who are ill helps to protect others from illness and infection, and parents are alerted on a daily basis about any illness or infection in the nursery. Staff wear gloves and aprons when changing nappies, and feeding gowns when feeding babies. Robust rotas are in place and implemented effectively to ensure all areas and equipment are clean. Children are learning to understand and are becoming aware of good health and hygiene practices through well-established routines, discussions and topics. Their bathrooms are made welcoming with photographs of children illustrating good hygiene routines. There is equipment to support their independence, such as a 'step up' to the changing mat and low-level toilets, sinks and mirrors. This helps children learn the skills of toileting, hand washing and brushing teeth. Photographs of children on their individual drinking bottles help children to learn to drink from their own water bottle. Clear procedures are in place to ensure children receive appropriate care when they have an accident or become ill to maintain their good health.

All children enjoy sociable meal times. They develop good appetites and enjoy a varied menu which mostly contains meals made from fresh produce with an expanding selection of healthy options. Good attention is given to ensuring children's individual dietary needs are met. Children have opportunities to develop awareness about the food they eat. For instance, they take part in simple cooking activities, they have looked at what ingredients have gone into making their mid-day meals and they are able to play and experiment with food such as cereal and pumpkin in the role-play area.

Children enjoy regular opportunities to be active and have physical exercise which promotes development of their physical skills. Staff have attended training events and use a range of programmes and resources to provide stimulating and fun physical activities. Children show clear delight in moving their bodies purposefully to musical action songs as well as controlling and stretching their bodies to yoga positions. The outdoor area has been developed to provide a wider range of play opportunities for children including growing areas, a mark-making area and a climbing area. 'Ellie's play house' provides children with the opportunity to develop the skills needed to climb up and down stairs, as well as lots of opportunities for imaginative play. At times during the day older children benefit from being able to freely access the outdoor play area. However, younger children in the nursery do not always benefit from daily fresh air.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The nursery is a bright and welcoming environment. Children and parents receive a warm welcome into the nursery by staff that are always on hand to greet them and there are lots of colourful displays of children's work and photographs of children at play. This helps to promote a sense of belonging. Space and resources are plentiful, of good quality and organised effectively to create an accessible stimulating environment which encourages self-exploration and supports

children's independence. This allows children to initiate their own play and follow their own interests.

Children are kept secure as there is an effective system for managing access to the premises and rigorous systems are in place to ensure children are collected by authorised persons. Ongoing risk assessments and good levels of supervision are used to identify and minimise potential hazards. This helps to ensure children are able to play safely. Children are learning about how they can keep themselves safe. Staff take time to discuss safe practices with them, such as how to carry chairs and scissors safely when they are moving them around the room. Road safety topics and regular practises of the emergency evacuation procedure also help children become aware of what to do to keep themselves safe.

Children are protected because staff have good understanding of their individual responsibility for reporting concerns. Clear details of the comprehensive child protection policy and procedures are in place and shared with parents which helps to ensure appropriate procedures are put into practice when necessary.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children make good progress in their development because staff have a deep rooted understanding of the principles and concepts of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Children form strong relationships with their key person who is their main carer in the nursery. They are encouraged to form relationships with other children and to show consideration for each other. For example, children are reminded to show a new child what to do at routine times and to include him in their play. Younger children show clear enjoyment and demonstrate they are getting to know all the other children's names as they give out the cups at snack time. This helps to foster a strong sense of belonging. Staff spend lots of time encouraging children to express their needs and make choices. This helps children to develop their self-esteem and confidence. All staff have a kind and caring approach to children which helps to foster children's well-being. For example, babies and toddlers snuggle into staff and enjoy cuddles and close contact. Children's social skills are promoted very well.

All children under three years are stimulated and appropriately challenged. Very good emphasis is given to explorative and sensory play which is particularly good for supporting young children's learning. Children clearly benefit and enjoy exploring and experimenting with the wonderful array of natural and man made materials which are on offer to them throughout the day including wood, cane, water, sand, paint, hay, leaves, shredded and cardboard paper, shiny metals and materials. Very good emphasis is also given to supporting children's language and communication skills. Staff use all everyday routines and experiences to encourage children to communicate and make their wishes understood. Staff make regular observations of children. They use this information to identify children's interests and progress and to inform their planning. This helps staff to recognise and support children's next steps in learning.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Teaching is rooted in a strong knowledge of how children learn and of the stepping stones that lead towards the early learning goals. Good emphasis is given to developing warm and trusting relationships with children which significantly contributes to children's confidence and self-esteem. Staff continually strive to make learning a rewarding and enjoyable

experience, related to children's interests, in which children explore, investigate, discover and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills and understanding. Staff are skilful in asking children questions which creates a constant learning environment for children where their interests and imagination are fostered. The learning environment and the programme of activities are interesting and stimulating, providing children with new information and experiences to build on what they already know.

Planning effectively covers all aspects of the six areas of learning. Activities are well-matched to children's abilities and interests and are planned to include all children. Consequently, children become truly interested in what they are doing. Children's progress along the stepping stones is monitored and this information is effectively used by staff to identify children's interests and next steps in learning. However, present recording systems are not yet fully effective in presenting this information in a way that clearly reflects each child's current achievements to inform parents of their child's progress and next steps in learning on an ongoing basis.

Children show good levels of interest and are eager to take an active part in activities and routine experiences. For example, children need little encouragement to take their turn in sharing their weekend experiences at circle time and they sit and concentrate at the computer, persevering to control the cursor to click onto the next programme. They are confident and independent. For instance, they know their own needs including their individual dietary needs and how much food they want to eat. They gain increasing personal independence as they serve their own food at dinner time. They show good levels of care and concern for others. For instance, standing back to allow another child to pass by. The good progress children make in this area of development supports their achievements in all other areas of learning.

Children are confident to take an active part in conversations which are mostly self-initiated. They spend the majority of their time talking and listening to each other and to staff who actively extend their vocabulary and their understanding of the meaning of words. Children handle books confidently in the comfy book area, they are beginning to use books to find things out such as how to care for their pets. They develop a good interest in the rich array of print in their environment. Children show good levels of interest in writing for their own purpose and take part in activities to foster this including making their own books.

Children's interest in numbers, numerals, solving simple problems, size, shape and measuring is actively and effectively supported by staff. Children count for their own purpose to see if they have the same amount of dolls to put bandages on in the role play areas as their friends. They enjoy counting and recognising the numerals on the displays of their work and on the play resources and they use language to describe size and shape.

Good emphasis is given to providing children the tools to fire their imaginative play. For instance, children become engrossed in role play in 'baby clinic' putting the stethoscope in their ears and on the dolls chest. This type of play helps children to make sense of their world. Children's creativity is valued and fostered. Children have good opportunities to learn through their senses including visiting a local florist shop where they were able to smell, feel and see an array of fresh flowers, some of which were bought and brought back to nursery. They are able to consolidate skills using a wide range of materials for their own purpose as well as being encouraged to focus on making their own recognisable representations of things they see. For example, children looked at the sunflowers growing in the garden and a famous painting of a sunflower before they painted their own sunflowers. Children are able to find out more about living things as they care for stick insects, fish and plants in their room and experience visits

from 'Zoolab'. They learn about caring for their environment as they recycle used items such as plastic bottles and cartons in the nursery recycle area.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are valued and respected, and encouraged to make positive contributions in the nursery. For example, children are encouraged to take an active part in their care. Staff completed simple questionnaires with children to obtain and act upon their views of nursery life. Children are fully involved and encouraged to make decisions in procedures such as applying medication creams. They are encouraged to know what colour plate and cup they have and what this represents in terms of their own individual dietary needs. From an early age they become 'helpers' in tasks such as giving out cups for drinks and tidying away. They take part in self-registration and photographs on coat pegs and cups enables them to access their own drinks and collect their own coats. Good focus is given to child-initiated play. Children make choices about what they play with and at times are able to choose to play in or outdoors. 'Max' the persona doll is used to support children to make sense of their own feelings and experiences. Children from different backgrounds are welcome at the nursery. Staff involve parents in fostering positive links with children's own culture and language. Resources positively represent the children who attend the nursery as well as the wider community, and many festivals are celebrated. Children's behaviour is good. They enjoy a very harmonious environment which helps to support their well-being. Much emphasis is given throughout the nursery to encouraging, praising and enabling children to develop consideration for others, to share and take turns.

Staff are dedicated, very forward thinking and use every conceivable opportunity to ensure children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully included in the nursery. Their success in meeting children's specific individual needs is inspiring. Children are enabled to make positive contributions, communicate, make choices and access all activities. Staff have worked extensively in partnership with parents and multiple agencies. Discussions with parents demonstrate the significant positive impact of the nursery's inclusive approach. As a result, children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are able to make the best progress they can.

Partnership with parent's and carers is exceedingly good and contributes to the overall quality of care for children. Parent's contributions are sought and valued. There is a Parent's Representative group who meet with the management of the nursery and The Hospital Trust who maintain the premises. Parental questionnaires are used to help evaluate the service and implement improvements. The complaints system is in line with current procedures and is effectively implemented to ensure parents are aware of all aspects which may impact on the care of their children. Information for parents is wide ranging and includes all the setting's comprehensive written policies and procedures, childcare issues and easy access to all planned activities throughout the nursery. Parents are actively involved in devising care plans for their children when they first start the nursery. Staff are available on a daily basis to exchange information with them as well as providing written details about children's daily care and activities. Open evenings are held for parents to view their children's progress folders and discuss any issues with staff. Parents have also been invited to an open evening to experience the activities their children take part in. Written statements and discussions with parents demonstrate that parents hold the staff in high regard and have confidence in their ability to care for and help their children develop and progress. They particularly feel their children

benefit from how the staff get to really know their children and build very positive relationships with them.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early years education is good. Parents are informed about the Foundation Stage and curriculum through displays and open evenings. Newsletters and daily exchanges of information, displays and children's work keeps parents up to date with what children are doing and learning. This helps to support parents to be involved in their children's learning. Written reports and parents evenings are held twice-yearly to inform parents of their child's progress, although the systems for keeping parents involved and included in children's progress and next steps in learning on an ongoing basis is not yet fully effective.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall children's needs are met. A committed, highly motivated staff team provide good quality care and education to enhance children's experience and well-being. Staff have regular access to relevant training courses to improve their knowledge and skills which positively impacts on the care provided for children. Good procedures are in place for checking staff are suitable to promote children's safety and welfare and to ensure staff implement effectively the clear comprehensive policies and procedures which are in line with the National Standards.

The organisation of space and resources is good. The growing emphasis to provide older children with more access to the outdoors is very beneficial to their all round development and well-being, although this has not yet been extended to the younger children in the nursery. The very good organisation of indoor resources supports children's independence, progress and development very well.

The quality of leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The nursery benefits from a strong management structure. An effective monitoring and evaluation of the nursery education is in place which effectively identifies strengths and most areas for improvement. There is a clear vision and commitment to continually strive to improve learning for children. This ensures good early years practice which has a positive impact on children's learning.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the nursery was asked to improve the organisation of staff and space during dinner and sleep times and to improve the key person system to ensure all children's needs are identified and to improve the quality of care and play. Very good progress has been made. There is an extremely effective key person system in place. Children are cared for in general by a main carer who knows and meets their needs very well. This supports children's well-being as they become settled and develop a strong sense of belonging. Dinner and sleep times are now very sociable, calm occasions. Staff organise space well and are on hand to support children's independence at meal times and to provide comfort to aid sleep. This improves the quality of children's experiences.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that require 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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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 good.

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):

- provide more opportunities for younger children to benefit from daily fresh air.

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 recording systems to reflect each child's current achievements to inform parents of their child's progress and next steps in learning on an ongoing basis.

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