

Buffer Bear at Carter Community

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY268646
Inspection date	11 June 2008
Inspector	Bridget Copson
Setting Address	Blandford Close, Poole, Dorset, BH15 4BQ
Telephone number	01202 684064
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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 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?

Buffer Bear at Carter Community Neighbourhood Nursery is one of several nurseries run by Buffer Bears Limited. It opened in January 2004 and operates from three playrooms within the school buildings at Carter Community School, close to Poole town centre. A maximum of 59 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 50 weeks of the year.

There are currently 50 children aged from two to under eight years on roll. Of these, 15 children receive funding for early education.

The nursery employs 14 members of staff, most of whom hold or are working towards appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for within a generally clean and hygienic environment. Staff have systems in place to prevent the spread of infection in most areas. For example, they use colour coded cloths for cleaning and disinfecting, clean most toys on a rota basis and wash their own hands throughout the day. Staff also wear disposable gloves and aprons for changing nappies and ensure children's individual cot and bed linens are washed frequently. However, not all areas of the premises are kept clean and hygienic. This especially applies to the kitchen and areas of the main children's bathroom. Children learn about the importance of good personal hygiene through washing their hands and brushing their teeth after main meals.

Children benefit from a cooked lunch supplied by the school, with weekly menus showing a balanced range of meals, such as cottage pie with two vegetables, stir fry and fish dishes. Children enjoy healthy snacks at break times. For example, chopped salad vegetables with dips or fresh fruits. Children and babies have access to drinks of water throughout the day to ensure they do not get thirsty. The Baby Bears room has a dedicated milk kitchen which is kept suitably clean and hygienic for the preparation of bottles and meals. Children's health and fitness is promoted well through daily activities both indoors and outside. There are two separate outdoor play areas, one of which is segregated for younger children and babies to provide a safe area for their play. They use age appropriate equipment to promote their physical skills, such as low level climbing frames and slides, rockers, sand trays, ride-on toys and balls. The Baby Bears room provides the younger age group with equipment and furniture to promote their core strength and balance with open carpet space to practice their new mobility skills.

Children's health is further promoted through the records and documentation kept. This ensures dietary needs are met and records of any accidents, incidents and medication are signed by parents for consistency of care. All core staff hold appropriate first aid certificates and a first aid kit is kept in each play room. This supports staff well in caring for children appropriately in the event of an accident. Children learn about sun safety through wearing sun cream and hats during warmer weather.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are kept safe and secure in all areas of the provision through the effective measures in place to protect them. Staff complete risk assessments and carry out daily checklists for the outdoor play areas to maintain high standards of safety on a day to day basis. Children wear wrist straps for trips off the premises to ensure they are protected well. They learn about safety through clear staff guidance and expectations as well as practical activities. For example, walking safely on roads and practising the fire evacuation procedure.

Children are cared for within three separate play rooms, according to their age. They all have independent access to a range of well-maintained and age appropriate play provision in floor boxes and low level units. This ensures the environments are suitable to meet their needs and promote safe and independent play.

Children's welfare is safeguarded effectively by staff who are all aware of their roles and responsibilities regarding child protection and the procedures involved. They maintain

well-organised records to further protect children, such as a visitors record book, details of adults authorised to collect children, accurate staff and child attendance registers and keeping details of any existing injuries. Staff supervise children well at all times, but do allow some older children appropriate independence when using the toilets.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young children and babies are happy and settled in their respective play rooms. Those in the Baby Bears room enjoy a calm and peaceful environment in which they are surrounded by sensory resources to watch and explore. They play with confidence and curiosity, pulling toys off the low level units, or choosing from those set out around them. As children develop into the Pandas play room, they become more active and move freely between the segregated play areas, choosing from creative activities, imaginative play, small world sets and exploring in the quiet area. They focus well on their chosen activities. Young children and babies communicate well through clapping, cheering and using their early language skills to shout 'hello' to those coming into their room. As their language develops, they share simple conversations with friends in their play.

Staff work efficiently as a team to meet children's care routines and needs and prepare them for changes throughout the day. As a result, children remain happy and stimulated. They plan and monitor their learning and development using the same systems as those in receipt of nursery education funding. However, each play room chooses simple and realistic learning experiences each week to promote all areas of their development. For example, 'let's play with sand and water' in which children they learn to pour and scoop, feel textures, communicate their feelings and learn new words.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

Children's learning is planned by staff who have a generally good knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Weekly learning experiences are delivered using the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) as a framework to promote most areas of children's development. Children's progress is monitored appropriately by key workers through a new system of assessing their development. Staff observe children regularly and use the information to inform future planning and plan their next steps of learning. However, this system is not sufficiently established to provide a clear reflection of each child's current stage of development and to ensure all areas of children's learning are promoted well.

Most children focus well on things that interest them and play for long periods with their chosen activities during lots of free-play time. However, some younger children lose interest when challenge is too great and support is not sufficient to keep them involved. Children are forming early friendships with others who they link up with for play and discussions. They communicate with confidence and enjoy sharing news and talking about what they are doing. They are learning to listen at appropriate times, but insufficient support during some large group activities prevents some children from benefiting from the experience due to the interruptions of others. Children mark make in different areas of the play room to promote their early handwriting skills. They enjoy books in small groups with staff. However, many books are torn and damaged and children do not make use of the area independently to develop their interest in books.

Children are not developing a good understanding of numbers and they rarely count spontaneously in their play. They are learning to name shapes and complete some jigsaws and puzzles. However, opportunities for them to problem solve on a day to day basis are limited. They complete programmes on the computer, but do not have independent access to other resources to promote their understanding of information and communication technology. Children are developing an understanding of time and place through discussing past, present and future events from home and nursery. They look at changes in the environment throughout the seasons and how this affects them.

Children benefit from a good range of large and small scale physical play provision within their own outdoor play area as well as the Children Centre garden. For example, climbing frames and slides, bikes, racket and ball games, hoops and sand pit resources. They also join in parachute games. Children move with control and co-ordination and have the opportunity to play outside and run energetically each session. However, some very active children become frustrated when they have to wait for this stage of the session before letting off steam and this has an adverse affect on their behaviour. Children use one-handed tools, some of which they select independently, to develop their hand-eye co-ordination and to extend their own learning and creativity. They explore texture and form using different media and materials and experiment with colours to find out how they change when mixed. They use their imaginations in free-expression and adult led creative activities each session.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for equally and included fairly by staff who have effective systems in place to meet their individual needs. For example, staff caring for babies are aware of their care routines and keep written details of their routines and daily activity. All children are assigned a key worker who works with parents to complete settling-in forms to support children with their transition through the nursery. In addition, consistent teams of staff, well-organised records and good parental communication ensure children's needs are met well. The setting has an allocated special educational needs co-ordinator who has attended training courses and liaises with the local authority to support her in the event of meeting any additional needs for a child in their care. Children are developing a good sense of belonging. They have their own labelled place mats and pegs, see photographs of themselves and their art work displayed in their play rooms and have their own special events celebrated. Older children also self-register on arrival and sing a welcome song to each other each session.

Children behave generally well. They are provided with calm and consistent messages from staff to support them in learning difficult lessons. For example, younger children learning to share and wait for their turn. As they progress they learn the golden rules which they discuss each session, such as using quiet voices, listening at group time and sharing. Most children demonstrate positive attitudes. However, some children become disruptive when they have insufficient support to keep them focused and when they are kept waiting for long periods of time without stimulation. Staff manage any issues through calm and consistent messages and provide children with encouragement, praise and stickers to raise their self-esteem.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff have established good partnerships with parents for consistency of care. Parents receive an information pack which provides information for most areas of the provision. Parents are kept well-informed through large notice boards in both entrances with staff photographs,

menus, planning, key worker lists, policies and procedures, risk assessments, Buffer Bear and Ofsted contact details and certificates. Parents are also provided with termly newsletters and good communication has been established with staff caring for their children.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are provided with good opportunities to get involved in their child's learning. For example, the play room displays the weekly planned activities and details of the EYFS framework. Parents are invited to attend consultation meetings with key workers twice a year during which they are provided with a written progress report to discuss. Staff and parents complete simple details of children's stage of development when moving up into the Big Bears pre-school room to support staff in forming early assessments. A new system has been developed for all children, in line with the EYFS, but has not yet been implemented.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by a newly established team of staff who are deployed permanently in the play rooms to support them in becoming established and to provide consistent care. Staff attend essential core training courses to update their knowledge and skills and additional courses to support them in their individual roles and in meeting children's needs. The setting has clear recruitment and vetting procedures in place to ensure all staff are suitable to care for children. These are not implemented consistently for all new staff to ensure every aspect of their suitability is vetted before they start caring for children. However, effective systems are in place to safeguard children's welfare until all checks have been completed. Staff's on-going suitability is monitored appropriately through an induction programme and annual appraisals for some staff.

The setting has an up to date operational plan which ensures the safe management of the setting, according to regulations. Staff are deployed effectively at most times to meet children's needs and are supported by regular bank staff to maintain ratios and provide consistent care for children. Staff have some systems in place to monitor the quality of care. For example, staff meetings, Buffer Bear quality monitoring visits with room action plans, health and safety checklists and meetings with the local authority. However, systems do not ensure good standards of health and hygiene are maintained in all areas and staff are deployed effectively to promote children's behaviour and well-being. Children's records and related documentation are well-organised and stored securely to ensure confidentiality is maintained.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management is satisfactory.

Staff have some systems in place to monitor the quality of nursery education and its strengths and weaknesses. For example, regular activity evaluations, reports from the local authority and action plans. However, this does not ensure all aspects of their learning are promoted, that challenges are always realistic and that all children benefit from large group activities. The staff have established links with the local schools which most children attend to support them with their transition through school.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the setting agreed to ensure that staff motivate, stimulate and challenge children effectively during activities (also applies to nursery education). It also agreed to ensure that staff manage behaviour appropriately and consistently. The setting has a newly established team of staff, most of whom hold or are working towards appropriate early years qualifications. In addition, all core staff have attended training to extend their knowledge of the learning and development needs of children in their respective play rooms. As a result, children are happy and active. Staff have also attended behaviour management training and, as a result, manage behaviour appropriately and consistently.

At the last nursery education inspection, the setting agreed to ensure that all staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage. Most staff working with children have attended training and the team all receive regular support and guidance from the local authority regarding teaching methods and delivery of the curriculum. As a result, they have a generally good knowledge of the Foundation Stage to promote children's learning.

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.

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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 standards of health and hygiene to prevent the risk of cross-infection, especially in the kitchen and children's bathroom
- improve the organisation of large group activities and preparation times to ensure children's behaviour and well-being is supported fully
- ensure staff employment procedures are implemented fully for all staff to ensure all aspects of their suitability are vetted fully.

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 the learning opportunities for children to further promote child-led play and all aspects of their learning, especially their mathematical development, listening skills and interest in books
- improve the organisation of large group activities to ensure children benefit fully from the learning experiences and that challenges meet the needs of all children present.

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