

Little Bears Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY362639
Inspection date	09 June 2008
Inspector	Timothy Butcher
Setting Address	8 Martindale Road, Weston-super-Mare, Avon, BS22 8QE
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Registered person	Linda Mary Weston
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?

Little Bears Day Nursery is a privately owned nursery. It was registered in 2007 and is situated within a residential area just off the Locking Road, in Weston-super-Mare, North Somerset. Children attend from a wide geographical area. The nursery operates from a two-storey building with a separate baby annexe. There are enclosed play areas at the rear and side of the premises. A maximum of 50 children may attend the nursery at any one time. It is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 for 52 weeks of the year except bank holidays. There are currently 84 children on roll aged from six weeks to under five years. Of these, 30 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery supports children with special education needs and those who speak English as an additional language. There are 14 members of staff, of whom 13 work directly with the children. Of these 12 members of staff, including the manager, hold an appropriate child care qualification. The nursery receives support from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are healthy because they are well cared for by staff who consult closely with parents and carers. Staff have a clear understanding of children's dietary and health needs. Children are sensitively cared for should they have an accident and require first aid. There are clear policies and procedures for dealing with accidents and these are consistently followed. Parents are kept fully informed and asked to sign in acknowledgement that information has been shared with them. Procedures for the administering of medication are robust.

Children follow good and simple hygiene practices, like hand washing, and they are helped to understand that washing their hands before handling food and after using the toilet helps keep them healthy. Many confidently take themselves to the toilet. Staff in each room are well organised to support those children just learning these skills. Procedures for changing nappies, for example in the baby unit, scrupulously protect children from the possible spread of infection. Babies are kept content and comfortable because staff distract children while the procedure takes place and hold a conversation with them. Information about nappy changes are consistently recorded on day sheets and these are shared with the parent. Older children take responsibility to blow their own noses, in the pre-school rooms and the arrangements encourage them to develop their independence, however, staff are sometimes less vigilant when children are outside. The resources that support children to undertake these self-care skills while outside are inconsistently provided.

Children are encouraged to eat healthily. The staff are fully aware of children's dietary needs and information about children's needs and preferences are displayed. Children have healthy and nutritious snacks and meals. Water is made readily available to children, for example, toddlers have named bottles and even the youngest of these ask for, or independently access, their drinks. Pre-school children do not always have easy access to water when playing outside. Creatively planned activities introduce children to different foods from around the world, for example, children eat noodles using chop sticks during a range of activities around the theme of Japan. Children interact and warmly communicate with each other at snack time however, pre-school staff do not sit with children. As a result, further opportunities for children to learn from the good role modelling that staff provide are reduced; and although staff provide good attention to children, the close support of children is made more difficult.

Children enjoy the daily opportunities to be physically active. They play outdoors at least twice daily when the weather allows. Toddlers squeal with laughter as they learn to steer and stop when using sit-on equipment. They have fun negotiating the space and each other. They use climbing equipment and explore their physical strength as they pull themselves up and crawl under obstacles. A child giggles with delight as she goes high on the see-saw. Pre-school children thoroughly enjoy the outside environment. Boys and girls develop their climbing and balancing skills as they traverse the wooden rope bridge and jump on tyres. They practice their coordination skills as they throw and catch a variety of different sized balls; and show excitement as they practice sliding down quickly and slowly on the slide. Some physical activities are specifically planned to closely meet the identified developmental needs of individual children. For example, indoors, children have good opportunities to test their coordination skills as they follow instructions and copy increasingly complex actions and movements at circle time. A staff member leads the session while another staff member makes observations of children's abilities.

Babies have a rich environment within the baby unit in which to explore their developing large muscle control skills. Those beginning to bare their own weight, pull themselves up on furniture, use push-along equipment and stand absorbed at activity centres designed to be at a comfortable height for them. The baby unit is beginning to provide greater opportunities for babies to play outside in the fresh air. The setting now has a new all weather, soft surfaced area where babies are able to move and play safely.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children have a very safe environment in which to play. The provider has carried out an excellent risk assessment of the premises and has very effective control measures in place to reduce the risk of accidental injury to children. Daily visual checks are undertaken of the whole premises. Staff are conscientious and vigilant, for example, when children enter the fully enclosed and secure outside areas for the first time each day they undertake further visual checks of the environment. Risk assessments are meticulously undertaken and clearly assessed and scaled. Clear safety measures are identified and ongoing reviews ensure that measures remain effective. Accidents are cross-referenced to the risk assessment to identify any emerging pattern of risk. Entry to the premises is very closely monitored. Parents and carers have a clear understanding of the importance of the tightly controlled security arrangements. Stringent procedures ensure the clear registration of children when they arrive and depart. Closed circuit television and a secure door entry system are in place. Staff are vigilant and closely supervise children both inside and out.

Children learn about keeping themselves and each other safe, for example, they are prompted to remember that it is dangerous to climb back up the slide and simple explanation is given as to why they should not do so. Children show a good awareness about the safety rules and fire drills are carried out regularly with detailed information recorded. Stair gates prevent children from straying into areas unsupervised and children are closely supervised when using the stairs and know to tread carefully and to use the low-level handrail.

Children benefit from the warm and very child-friendly environment that has been created throughout the nursery. The setting is made welcoming to children with many colourful posters, pictures and photographs. There are many examples of the children's own work displayed on the walls throughout the nursery. Information for parents such as policies and procedures are prominently displayed. Staff work hard to keep the room environment fresh and interesting for children with a host of pictures of children having fun and what they have achieved. Children readily use the pictures, labelling and information to discuss what they know and have done. They have fun identifying themselves and each other; a strong sense of belonging has been established.

Resources are carefully planned to provide access across each area of learning and for the whole of children's development. Resources in each room are appropriate to the ages and stages of development for that particular group. Children freely access resources for themselves, the majority of which are stored invitingly in low-level storage units that are labelled with pictures so that even the youngest children have easy access. In the pre-school room resources are well set out into defined areas, such as science. Children express choice, for example at the beginning of each session, and fetch the resources they wish to play with. They quickly become engrossed in their play. Some resources are specifically made to meet a child's individual need or interest or to enhance a particular activity, such as realistic bus ticket props in the role play for pre-school children and a laminated book of favourite engine characters for a toddler. Babies just learning

to sit unaided on the floor have soft nests to support them so that they are able to sit comfortably and in safety. Special flooring 'spots' support the exploration of creative materials and messy play for toddlers and make very good use of the available space.

Children have their welfare safeguarded because staff have a clear awareness of their responsibilities in regard to the protection of children and a good understanding of the possible signs and symptoms of potential abuse. There are very clear policies and procedures in place to support staff and to guide them should they have a concern about a child.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children make good progress in all areas. Children are happy and confident and settle quickly upon arrival. Children strongly benefit from the warm interactions that staff have with children and as a result children's learning and development is significantly enhanced. Children are keen to explore and to learn new skills. Babies thrive in an environment that offers plenty of opportunity for them to explore with all their senses. A child successfully picks up a ball and concentrates to put it back into the ball pool. The child has fun and practices hand and coordination skills, sat outside of the ball pool and alongside a member of staff. Another child sitting upright unaided in the ball pool, giggles and wriggles arms and toes to swish the balls backwards and forwards. The child is clearly fascinated by the experiences of touch, texture, colour and movement in the ball pool. Staff have a good understanding of the needs of this age group and plan well for babies all round development through a host of interesting activities. Babies own routines are followed and there is plenty of physical contact and cuddles for all children.

Staff have a good understanding of how children learn and use this to provide a broad range of stimulating activities for children to take part in. The nursery follows a topic led approach around which activities are planned, such as 'me and my family' and 'spring and new life.' Staff have a secure knowledge of the Birth to three matters framework and regular observations of what children do contribute to the assessment process. A tracking sheet is used to monitor the progress for each child and observations of what children do is regularly undertaken. Toddlers have some good opportunities to take their play and learning outside each day. They have their own enclosed area where they happily explore the sounds that they can make with a range of interesting everyday objects hung from the fence. A child laughs with delight at the noise a big plastic box makes when hit with a wooden spoon. Inside, children listen intently to the different musical sounds they make with a wide range of musical instruments that they have chosen. Staff skilfully support children to listen to the different sounds. Children concentrate hard and thoroughly enjoy keeping up the beat. Children have good opportunities to count, use creative materials and to look at, handle and have books read to them.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and of how children learn. Staff know children well and plan an exciting programme of play opportunities and activities for children across each area of learning. Planning processes are secure and information about children's progress is identified through effective evaluation. Key workers make regular and detailed observations of children's achievements. These contribute to the planning process and are effectively used within each child's learning profile to record what children have done. Learning profiles are not used to show the rate of children's progress or as a means of tracking children's progress along the stepping stones.

However, each key worker has a very good understanding of their children's current abilities and this knowledge is effectively used to plan for children's next steps in development. Staff work well together to plan small group activities for their own key groups, some of which is based on children's observed interests. Clear learning intentions are identified, enabling children to make good progress.

Children are eager to learn and confident to try new experiences. Children learn that marks carry meaning. They have good opportunities to make marks to represent their ideas through a range of mediums and this is extended when they take their play outside as such things as paper and crayons are made readily available. Some children are able to make letter-like marks and others form recognisable letters and are encouraged to try to write their own names on their pictures or artwork. Children clearly enjoy having stories read to them. At small group times they look and listen attentively to the story. They offer their ideas when asked to predict the next part of the story. Staff skilfully encourage each child to contribute, such as through the use of unfinished sentences and open ended questioning. They are asked to count the vehicles in the book being held up in a story about emergency vehicles.

Children use mathematic skills in everyday activities. They easily count one to nine and do so spontaneously during their free play as well as when prompted to do so by staff, such as during circle time when children look at the calendar, name the day of the week and observe what the weather is like. They use simple computer programmes to count, match shapes and to practise their hand to eye coordination while using their mouse control to fill shapes with colour. Children count the number of wings on their three dimensional constructions and the children around the table. They learn about and explore simple subtraction and addition, for example when using building blocks in a self-chosen activity. Children are encouraged to become independent learners through choosing some resources and activities for themselves.

Children happily explore a good range of creative activities that are planned to stimulate their interests and capture their imaginations. They cut different cards, paper, cloth and other materials in a wide range of cut and stick activities. Children squeal with delight as they explore at the water tray outside. They explore capacity as they pour, squirt and fill containers. They spontaneously investigate which items float and which do not. Documentation and photographic information shows that children thoroughly enjoy a wide range of creative materials, such as glue, paint, gloop, noodles, baked beans and compost, in a host of often inspiring activities. Children explore with all their senses, such as through colour, textures, sounds and smell.

Children develop their knowledge and understanding of the world through a range of planned and spontaneous activities including the use of magnets, binoculars, the growing of plants in the sensory garden, and through the use of some reference books. Children have some opportunities to explore the natural world, for example, they find a spider's web and carefully blow it and watch the spider move. Planned activities to provide rich experiences of the natural world are less in evidence.

Although there is some variety in the themed activities provided in the role play area, some, but not all activities, are creatively presented to be inspiring to children. Some activities do not provide rich experiences for children that thoroughly capture their imaginations. However, children have good opportunities to spontaneously use their imaginations, for example, through the dressing up materials that are readily accessible and that are also used when children take their play outside. A child dresses up in a bright skirt and swirls the skirt around watching the effect. She runs to the area where music is playing and other children join her to dance and to jiggle to the music.

Teaching provides realistic challenge for children and is often inspiring. All children are offered choice in their play and activities are planned to follow their interests. Staff sensitively and skilfully guide children to come to the correct answer or to think further. Children's learning is well supported by an enthusiastic and skilled staff team who interact well with children.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and treated with respect by a caring and committed staff who are keen to ensure that each child's needs are identified and met well within the setting. Staff help children learn about and celebrate differences through meaningful activities. They celebrate birthdays, talk about some other cultures and ways of life and help children share their own experiences with others. The setting has some multi-cultural resources that reflect positive images of diversity.

Children with learning difficulties or disabilities have their needs closely met as staff work in partnership with parents and carers and constructively with other professionals to carry through individual education plans, and to ensure inclusion and to support progress. Documentation shows that the staff work sensitively and constructively with emerging developmental needs.

Staff have high expectations of children and have a positive and inclusive approach to the management of behaviour. Children are learning right from wrong because staff provide clear and consistent boundaries and are themselves good role models. Children are strongly helped to feel good about themselves through positive praise. Children get on well with each other. They show care and consideration for each other and benefit from explanation about how their behaviour may impact on others. They are encouraged to share and learn to take turns as this is positively practised in a number of ways, such as at story time, during mathematical activities around the table and when using the computer together. Staff have begun to use a conflict solution approach. Children are happy, settled, and quickly become involved in activities, leaving little time for boredom or undesirable behaviour. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Comprehensive and clear written information about policies and procedures is displayed prominently around the nursery for parents to read and for them to take copies away. The nursery places an emphasis on the good exchange of information and the key worker system effectively supports the good exchange of information. Parents are warmly welcomed and informal discussions regularly take place.

Parents report positively about the setting in general, the approachability and friendliness of its staff and the good range of experiences provided for their children. They comment positively on the information sharing processes including the parents' evenings that provide detailed information and discussion about the nursery education for pre-school children and the Birth to three matters framework for those under three years. Parents state they have confidence that their children are kept safe and that the premises are very secure.

Information is shared with parents through the parents evening, access to the learning diaries, a newsletter and through access to the nursery website. Picture displays illustrate the activities that children are involved in and their progressive steps in development.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The nursery business manager has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the whole nursery. A clear system of self-evaluation and a comprehensive action plan, that sets out the future direction of the nursery, is in place. This identifies the steps to make future improvements. There is a strong commitment to provide the best care and learning environment for children. As a result, staff are highly motivated. The whole staff team have clear roles and responsibilities and work well together.

Children's care is greatly enhanced by the good organisation within the setting. Time, space and resources are used flexibly and effectively to offer children a wide variety of experiences, in a child-friendly and well-organised environment. Indoor and outdoor space is laid out well to maximise play opportunities for children.

Children benefit from the suitable routines. Children are grouped appropriately. Free-flow and more structured activities are planned to provide a range of experiences for all children and there is a suitable balance between child-initiated and adult-led play.

Documentation, policies and procedures are used effectively to promote the welfare, care and learning of all children, for example, the assessment of risk is particularly thorough. All legally required documentation is in place and is subject to regular review. Parents are fully consulted. They are asked to give consent to such things as the emergency medical treatment of children. There is a clear system in place for the recruitment of new staff and for checking the suitability of all staff in line with current legislation.

The leadership and management of nursery education is good. The nursery business manager, along with the pre-school manager, have a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the nursery education provision. The staff team use their thorough knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum, frequent discussions and meetings to effectively plan a wide range of interesting activities that excite and challenge children in each area of learning. However, the learning profiles are not used to show the rate of children's progress or used as a means of tracking children's progress along the stepping stones and this weakens the planning process for children. Children are cared for by a capable and skilled staff team. They benefit from the good adult-child interaction and from the often vibrant play environment. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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 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):

- review the procedures that promote children's independence and self-care skills including those that support children keeping their noses clean when using the outside play area

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):

- further evaluate and maintain children's assessment and development records to ensure that they are used to inform the planning of children's future learning; and develop further opportunities for children to explore the natural world and use their imaginations such as within the role play area.

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