

Buffer Bear Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 319135
Inspection date 15/09/2008
Inspector Kathleen Snowdon

Setting address 1 Neville Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear,
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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Description of the setting

Buffer Bear Nursery was registered in 1993 and is part of a national nursery chain. It is registered for a maximum of 186 children; currently there are 100 children under five years on roll. The nursery is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The nursery is located in a building adjacent to the railway station in Newcastle upon Tyne. Entry to the nursery involves climbing stairs.

Children who attend live in Newcastle and surrounding areas and they are accommodated across four rooms according to their age and developmental stage. As well as this, the children have access to an enclosed area for outdoor play. The nursery supports children who are learning to speak English as an additional language.

The nursery provision opens from 07.30 to 18.00, Monday to Friday for 52 weeks of the year. Twenty five staff work directly with the children while the manager and the deputy are supernumerary. All hold appropriate childcare qualifications. A holiday scheme operates also. This is registered on the compulsory and voluntary parts of Childcare Register and accommodates a maximum of eight children aged from three to under eight. Times of operation are the same as the nursery provision but apply to school holiday periods only.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Staff confer with parents to plan enjoyable activities for the children. These help children to make good progress in all areas of their learning and development. As well as this, very good health and safety arrangements promote children's welfare overall. Good priority is given to inclusion so all children, including those who are learning to speak English as an additional language, are well supported. The whole staff group participates in on-going self-assessment, producing a highly effective service that meets the needs of all its users.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- consolidate staff's knowledge of the educational programme for Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy to avoid gaps in planning
- extend children's knowledge and understanding of the world by increasing opportunities that enable them to explore and investigate in self-initiated indoor and outdoor activities.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Rigorous recruitment procedures ensure that suitable and appropriately qualified staff are employed to care for and teach children. This is followed by highly effective supervision from senior managers, which means that staff receive good support and guidance as they work with the children from day to day. An effective key person system is in place to ensure that the needs of individual children are met in full.

All staff show a strong commitment to improvement, demonstrated in the way they have addressed recommendations from the last inspection and by their frequent participation in relevant, further training. As well as this, they complete self-evaluation sheets which encourages them to reflect on their practice.

Much value is placed on the views and opinions of parents. They receive questionnaires inviting them to make suggestions for improvement. In turn, parents receive feedback from the nursery in the form of 'You Said, We Did' leaflets. Parents have very positive views of the nursery and the staff. They say that the service they receive 'goes way beyond their expectations' and describe staff as 'fabulous' and 'really caring'.

All staff give very good priority to the children's health and safety. Risk assessments are carried out by nursery staff and outside agencies resulting in an environment where hazards are minimal. Staff are well deployed. Staffing ratios are well observed and staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities; alongside management's methodical approach to records and documentation, this produces a service that runs smoothly and efficiently.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Very good relationships exist between children and the staff. As a result children are happy and secure, which increases their propensity to learn new skills. Staff use observation and collaborate with parents to assess individual children. Children who are learning English as an additional language are well supported through the effective partnership between staff and parents. This increases children's capacity to acquire the grammar and vocabulary of their home language as well as English.

Most plans cover all areas of learning. This produces a varied curriculum based on children's individual abilities and personal interests. Staff's knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage educational programmes is sound overall and helps children make progress towards the early learning goals. Their knowledge of Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy, specifically how to apply this when planning for babies, requires consolidation though. Similarly, Knowledge and Understanding of the World is well covered in planned, adult directed activities. However, there are too few opportunities for children to explore and investigate in self-initiated activities, both in and outdoors.

The children have excellent opportunities to develop their communication skills. For example, they engage in lively conversations with their peers and adults. They listen attentively too, especially to favourite stories like 'Dirty Berty'. This helps them to understand that text carries meaning and introduces them to the pleasures of

reading.

The rooms in which children are based, are welcoming and well organised, enabling the children to move freely and safely. This encourages the development of new and emerging skills, such as standing, walking, hopping and skipping. Sensible boundaries, like the 'kind hands' rule and the 'no running indoors' request, are effective in teaching children right from wrong and how to stay safe. All play areas are well resourced giving children plenty of choice and ample scope in which to have fun and enjoy themselves.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	Good
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	Good
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	Good

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	Good
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	Good
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	Good
How well are children safeguarded?	Good

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	Good
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	Good
How well are children helped to stay safe?	Good
How well are children helped to be healthy?	Good
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	Good
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	Good
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	Good

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met

Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

Detail of the complaint/s

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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.