

Buffer Bear at Waterloo

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	29/04/2010
Inspector	Josephine Geoghegan
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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 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.

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Description of the setting

Buffer Bear at Waterloo registered in 2004. It is part of the Buffer Bear Network which currently comprises of 40 nurseries across the country. Buffer Bear at Waterloo is situated in a two storey refurbished building in a residential area in Waterloo. Local shops and parks are within walking distance. On the ground floor there are four play rooms, a kitchen, an office, children's bathroom, nappy changing area and disabled toilet; on the first floor there are two playrooms, children's bathroom and nappy changing area. Children share an enclosed garden for outside play.

The nursery is registered on the early years register to provide care for a maximum of 60 children, of these 44 may be under three years, and of these, 24 may be under two years at any one time. The nursery is also registered on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the childcare register, although they do not presently offer care to children in these age ranges. There are currently 36 children in the early years age range on roll. No children presently attend who have identified special educational needs and/or disabilities. The setting supports a few children who are learning English as an additional language. The nursery operates from Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm throughout the year, except for bank holidays and two days a year for staff training.

The nursery employs 18 staff, including the manager and a cook, of these, 12 hold relevant childcare qualifications equivalent to NVQ3, three hold NVQ level 2 and two are currently unqualified.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The setting has made exceptional progress since the last inspection. Staff and parents attribute the clear vision and continuous improvement to the drive of the new manager and development of a secure staff team. Excellent systems are in place to ensure the needs of all children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are met effectively. Staff maintain consistently high standards of practice in all group rooms. They have embraced the ethos of the Early Years Foundation Stage; implementing a broad range of policies, systems of evaluation and assessments of children's progress which promote their welfare, learning and development effectively.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- collate all methods of self-evaluation to provide a cohesive overview of the setting.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

High regard is given to safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. Staff show a clear understanding of procedures to follow if they are worried about children's welfare. They all attend relevant training with the company and the local authority. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place and displayed in the office, enabling staff to take prompt action if needed. In addition, children's welfare is safeguarded through appropriate use of all required documentation. Robust systems are in place to ensure the suitability of staff. These include appropriate vetting checks and ongoing systems of induction, supervision and appraisal. Children are cared for in a secure setting. There are excellent procedures in place to promote safety, for example, thorough risk assessments relating to all aspects of the setting are displayed in each group room and relevant areas. Staff conduct risk assessments prior to any outings and ensure children use safety equipment, such as, high visibility tabards and wrist straps. Staff demonstrate an excellent awareness of safety procedures, including carrying out well established fire drills with all children on a regular basis.

Promoting equality and diversity is embedded in staff practice. They relate the care and educational programmes to children's individual needs at all levels; they follow meal and sleep time routines of younger children and ensure the individual needs of all children are known and respected. This includes providing support for children who are learning English as an additional language and catering for children's individual dietary needs. Staff ensure children learn about a variety of cultures and beliefs through hands on experiences, such as participating in international day where children, parents and staff join together to share food, music and traditions. The setting is well resourced with toys and books that promote equality. The provision of a disabled toilet and a lift enable all users to gain equal access to all areas of the setting. Excellent use is made of time and space with resources deployed effectively to ensure children's needs are met. The employment of additional staff to cover lunchtimes and staff absences ensures children benefit from consistency of care by familiar staff at all times. Staff have embraced the system of free-flow play and provided a designated free-flow playroom on the ground floor. Older children have access to this while using the outside play area, enabling them to use a wide variety of resources that reflect all areas of learning at all times.

Staff use a wide variety of reliable methods to evaluate their service and drive purposeful improvements. They have devised a tracking system to actively evaluate all 'themes and commitments' of The Early Years Foundation stage (EYFS). They use this information to identify any areas for improvement, set an action plan and evaluate its implementation. This system is used consistently and effectively by staff in all group rooms, showing an outstanding commitment to putting the Early Years Foundation Stage principles into practice. In addition, they have begun a quality assurance scheme and evaluate their practice through peer observations and attend regular staff meetings to share information. Excellent systems are in place to evaluate the educational programmes. All

recommendations raised at the last inspection have been met appropriately, promoting children's welfare and learning. However, the system of collating the methods of self-evaluation to provide a cohesive overview of the setting is in its infancy.

The setting has established partnerships with external services that promote children's well-being. Engagement with parents is outstanding; they are offered a wide variety of information about the setting and their children's progress, ensuring information is shared effectively. All staff make time to discuss information with parents when they collect their children. Parents of younger children are offered a daily information sheet that provides information about meals, sleep and events of the day. Staff have recently devised a home/nursery interest book, enabling parents and staff to add information about children's interests and development in one shared record. Parents participate in a gradual settling in process and discuss how they value the thorough induction programme. Parents are involved in the life of the nursery. They attend events and celebrations and take part in new initiatives, such as the parent and children's art workshops. All parents spoken to during the inspection report that communication between themselves and staff is very good. They have noticed many improvements regarding their children's care, procedures of the nursery and parental involvement. Parents stated that their children feel safe, have good relationships with staff and are happy while attending the setting.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children benefit from an exceptionally stimulating learning environment. High regard is given to displaying their individual creative work in inventive ways, showing value for children's efforts and achievements. All group rooms are well organised, providing children with an excellent range of toys and books that reflect all areas of learning. These resources are appropriate for the age and abilities of the children attending each group room. They are stored at low level in containers labelled with pictures and writing, enabling children to make informed choices. In addition, wall displays of children's creative work, along with mobiles, swaths of materials and educational posters create a welcoming environment. The setting is clean and well maintained with excellent procedures implemented to promote safety. Children have use of an interesting outside play area. This is enclosed with areas of safety surface under the climbing frames, paved areas under an awning and garden areas; the outside play area is well organised with resources that reflect all areas of learning. Children's physical care needs are met well as all group rooms are well equipped with appropriate sized furniture and equipment.

Children's good health and well-being is actively promoted. Staff demonstrate high standards of hygiene practice, helping to prevent the spread of infection. They consistently use disposable gloves and aprons while serving food and during nappy changing routines and use shoe covers before entering the baby room. They keep accurate records relating to children's meals, sleep times, nappy changes, staff cleaning routines and room temperatures; this ensures any health concerns can be tracked effectively, if needed. Children benefit from a nutritional diet of meals that

are freshly cooked on the premises. They have constant access to fresh drinking water and older children freely use the snack station, enabling them to develop their personal independence and make healthy choices. Children's independence is also fostered well at meal times as older children serve their own food and drinks. Mealtimes are sociable events with children helping to set the tables with table cloths, their individual place mats and crockery. They then sit in small groups with staff and eat together in a relaxed atmosphere where they join in conversations, developing their social skills. Younger children and babies are encouraged to develop their independent feeding skills and staff cuddle babies while being bottle fed, helping them to feel secure. Effective procedures are in place to ensure any illness or injuries are dealt with appropriately, for example, staff hold first aid qualifications and relevant policies and documents are available.

Staff provide excellent support to aid children's learning and development. They are attentive and keenly follow children's interests. They provide a well planned and balanced range of activities throughout the day. These include time for group activities, free-play and adult-led activities and outings that support children's learning needs effectively. Planning for individual needs that are enjoyable and challenging across the areas of learning is outstanding. Staff use clear methods of tracking children's progress from their starting points and identify their next learning steps. They use spontaneous and timed observation methods to assess children's progress relating to all areas of learning and development and use this information to plan for children's interests and academic needs for the following week. This system is used consistently in all group rooms, ensuring the needs of all children are identified and catered for effectively. Excellent routines have been established to help children learn about expectations of their behaviour. For example, older children help to tidy up one area of the group room each week on a rota basis, encouraging them to take responsibility for their learning environment. All children are encouraged to help put away toys and younger children are supported in learning to share and take turns.

Opportunities for children to achieve and enjoy their learning experiences are outstanding. This is due to well planned activities that encourage children's active learning and hands on experiences. Children have good relationships with staff and each other. Staff are attune to younger children's attempts at speaking and encourage them to use language effectively. Older children freely engage in conversations, using language to explore real and imagined experiences. They draw representational pictures and make good attempts at writing their names showing well formed letters, developing their writing skills. Younger children make purposeful marks while using drawing materials and paints. Children have access to a wide variety of books; including home made books with photos and text relating to outings and activities they have participated in. Children have good opportunities to learn about their local environment through regular outings in the community; for example, they visit the library, parks and play areas. They also participate in planned activities, such as going shopping using their own shopping lists; they find their item and pay with the support of staff, developing their knowledge and understanding of the world. They learn about nature and living things through hands on experiences, such as, growing plants and seedlings. Younger children enjoy exploring. They develop their senses while using a range of malleable materials; babies splash happily in the bubbles of the water tray and

enjoy feeling the sand on their feet. Older children use the computer independently and confidently; following the programme and books that accompany the CD ROM effectively, developing their awareness of technology. Children are able to count accurately and show an awareness of number as they recognise numerals and are able to identify number sequence. They learn about weight and measure while using the scales and counters. Younger children learn about problem solving while fitting the train track together with staff and using peg puzzles and grading toys. Children have excellent opportunities to develop their physical skills while using the wide range of climbing equipment and wheeled toys in the outside play area. They show skilful use of hand held tools, for example, using scissors appropriately. Children's free creative expression is encouraged in all group rooms, using a variety of paint collage and malleable materials. Older children widen their perspective as they look at modern art and produce their own Tate modern display. Younger children engage in role play and imitate adults while using play food and utensils.

Children feel safe at the nursery as they have support of a key person and show a good sense of belonging. They benefit from well established routines that promote their safety. Their awareness of healthy lifestyles is enhanced through opportunities for regular exercise and fresh air while participating in free-flow play and during regular outings. Their individual dietary needs are met well and effective procedures are in place to promote their good health. Children have excellent opportunities to develop their skills for the future as they participate in purposeful activities that promote all areas of learning. They develop their positive contribution as they learn about expectations of their behaviour and about the community in which they live.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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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