

# Little Bears Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

---

**Unique reference number**

EY234843

**Inspection date**

04/03/2009

**Inspector**

Gillian Charlesworth

**Setting address**

St Leonards Village Hall, Jenkins Lane, St Leonards,  
Buckinghamshire, HP23 6NW

**Telephone number**

01494 758 081

**Email**

**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

Little Bears Pre-School opened over 20 years ago and was re-registered under a new name in September 2005. It is managed by a committee of volunteers and is situated in the parish hall in St Leonards, Buckinghamshire. Children have access to a hall for play, a secure outdoor area and access to the adjacent park and children's play area. The premises is on one level and has accessible ramps and toilet facilities.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 24 children may attend within the early years age range. It is open each weekday from 09:30 until 12:00 term time only. An optional lunch club is available on Mondays and Thursdays, extending the session until 13:15.

There are currently 25 children aged from two and a half years to four years on roll who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Children have varying attendance patterns and come from the village and surrounding area. There are no children attending with English as an additional language and a minority attending with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Little Bears Pre-School employs eight staff including relief staff. Of these, four, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications at NVQ level two or above. Two members of staff are working towards qualifications. The setting is a member of the Pre School Learning Alliance and receives support from the local authority.

## Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. The setting has a proactive approach and provides effectively for children, valuing them as individuals and helping them to make good progress in their learning and development. Children's safety and welfare is prioritised and they have fun in a healthy, welcoming and enabling environment. Policies, procedures and records underpin the effective management. There is generally a high level of commitment towards continuous improvement underpinned by strong partnerships with parents that support continuity for children.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- encourage children to help plan the layout and resources used in the environment ensuring that it is a challenging space for all children and homely enough to feel comfortable
- develop further experiences that help children to develop autonomy; this refers to evaluating the time spent on whole group activities

- review opportunities for children's health and well-being with particular regard to activities that offer physical challenge and those to promote children's independent healthy choices for food and drink.

## **The leadership and management of the early years provision**

There is a high level of staff at each session to support children's safety, welfare and individual needs, underpinned by effective arrangements for contingencies during staff absences. Security is given a high priority and recruitment procedures include appropriate vetting. Training is prioritised and staff have a good understanding of safeguarding procedures which are underpinned by the recently updated child protection policy. Risks are suitably managed to enable children's free movement and independence both indoors and out. Resources and activities are thoughtfully selected and informed by responsive planning based on children's interests. These are not always fully utilised by children or homely, for example, in the book area. The daily routines enable children to feel a sense of security and belonging although time spent in whole group activities is not always evaluated to maximise self-chosen play.

Partnerships with parents are well established and ensure each child's needs are met. Parents have many opportunities to be involved in the setting. They are actively encouraged to join the management committee and feel well supported. Informal discussions underpin this further, alongside a book club for four year olds that promotes and extends older children's learning at home. Parents are well informed through the parents' notice board, a brochure, newsletters and accessible complaints log. Organised parent consultations enable parents to review and contribute to children's learning and development records. Policies are usually available and are systematically reviewed in consultation.

Self-evaluation is driven by strong leadership and is in the early stages, involving the staff team and management committee and using a local authority audit tool. This has contributed to the identification of relevant strengths and targets for further improvement. For example, the setting has plans to improve links with other settings; to develop environmental print, use of cameras and improve the links between assessment and planning to help focus on children's next steps towards the Early Learning Goals. These will have a positive impact on children's learning and development. The majority of recommendations from the previous inspection have been successfully tackled or are being developed.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision**

Children are well supported and confident to approach adults. For example, they are eager to share books from home; receiving warm responses and engaging in meaningful discussions as they look at illustrations and turn pages together. The learning environment mostly helps children to make good progress. Children arrive confidently and know that print carries meaning as they recognise and select their names. They settle quickly and freely access the range of resources set-out in designated areas. Not all resources are widely used, for example, the book area

and resource trays but staff involve children in events such as book week to broaden their experiences.

There is a fixed timetable of planned activities, balancing equal amounts of free play and whole group routines during which the majority of children are fully engaged. For example, everyone is actively involved in a short registration, welcoming one-another and sharing important artefacts from home. Children make good use of free movement between indoors and outdoors during free play which enables them to experience plenty fresh air and feel the effects of the weather, including light showers. They actively enjoy child-led practical activities such as playing with sand or water and learning about capacity and volume. They have good relationships and enjoy playing vigorously with dinosaurs, using their imaginations and previous knowledge to develop short storylines. They learn to control their bodies and exercise with enjoyment during a music and movement session and organised outdoor play but are not sufficiently challenged in their gross motor physical development. This remains a recommendation from the last inspection. Children have good self-care skills and independently use the toilet, washing their hands appropriately and consistently. Drinks and snacks are not freely available to promote independent healthy choices but snack time is a social occasion, where children tuck into a range of healthy snacks that are provided from home, while staff oversee individual dietary needs and support children well. Children learn how to stay safe when using equipment such as knives and scissors. Road safety is promoted on occasional outings and through fundraising events such as 'pedal and push', resourced with pelican crossings.

Children are very well behaved and encouraged by the staff who are positive role models and create a calm and positive environment by listening to and praising children. Children competently solve issues as they arise, for example, as a child becomes frustrated and demands a train, another child shows care and concern and independently offers an alternative. Children are encouraged to take responsibility. They delight in helping to put resources in boxes, using this as a learning opportunity and talking to staff when they notice pictures of interest in books.

Observation and assessment systems are up-to-date and have been thoughtfully developed to focus on each individual child's immediate interests. Consequently, staff plan a resource-led environment that is relevant and meaningful. For example, collages of dried flowers are sensitively organised to talk about lifecycles and extend learning when children express interest in death and decay. Assessment arrangements and adult support is well defined for those with additional learning and development needs, giving staff clear targets to help children take the next steps. Professionals and parents are routinely involved. Specialist equipment, adaptations to the environment and teaching methods such as sign language are used to fully support children's individual and communication needs.

## 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*

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

### Leadership and management

<b>How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	2

### Quality and standards

<b>How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?</b>	2
<b>How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?</b>	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	3
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

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](http://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.