

Buffer Bear at St Richard's

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY286112
Inspection date	02/06/2009
Inspector	Michele, Karen Beasley
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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 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).

Description of the setting

Buffer Bear at St Richard's Day Nursery opened as part of the Buffer Bear group in 2004. The nursery is one of a large national chain of nurseries with a management and support structure. It operates from a purpose built building within the grounds of St. Richard's Hospital in Chichester, West Sussex and access to the premises is unrestricted. There are five play rooms, an office and staff facilities. The nursery has its own secure outside play area. The nursery serves the employees of the hospital staff, other National Health Service trusts and external families. The setting opens from 06:45 until 18:30 Monday to Friday throughout the year, with the exception of bank holidays and two training days.

The nursery receives support from the local early year's authority and from the management structure of the nursery chain. The nursery is in receipt of funding for nursery education. It supports children who have additional needs and English as an additional language.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register to care for a maximum of 60 children at any one time. There are currently 93 children on roll. A team of 21 staff, including bank and management staff, are employed. The majority of the staff are qualified in childcare and early years education. The nursery operates a training programme for all the staff and some staff have extra areas of responsibility within the nursery.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is inadequate. Practice within the setting is not sufficiently inclusive; ineffective links and partnership working with parents and other agencies and providers means that children's individual needs are not always appropriately identified and supported. Although staff are caring, ineffective systems are in place to monitor and evaluate teaching, curriculum, assessment and practice as a whole. The setting has made insufficient progress since the last inspection.

Overall, the early years provision requires significant improvement. The registered person is given a Notice to Improve that sets out actions to be carried out.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To comply with the requirements of the EYFS the registered person must take the following action by the specified date:

- ensure consistent observations and assessments are used to identify learning priorities enabling each child to achieve their full potential (Assessment arrangements) 01/07/2009
- plan and provide a suitable range of activities for older 01/07/2009

children and children with learning difficulties/disabilities, which are appropriate for their stage of development and based on their individual needs (Organisation)

- obtain sufficient details to ensure that every child is included and not disadvantaged because of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, learning difficulties or disabilities, or ability (Organisation) 01/07/2009
- ensure that effective systems and sufficient resources are in place to ensure that the individual needs of the children are met (Organisation) 01/07/2009
- ensure children's behaviour is managed effectively and in a manner appropriate for their age and stage of development and particular needs (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare) 01/07/2009

To improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- develop links with other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure effective continuity and progression for all
- ensure the SENCO has a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities
- create opportunities for children to learn about problem solving, reasoning and numeracy

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The previous management have insufficiently focused on improvement since the last inspection. However, a new management team is in place which are working closely with new staff teams to monitor, review and continuously evaluate all aspects of the nursery. As a result, an action plan is being implemented to improve the setting. For example, management and staff are aware that the nursery lacks resources and at the staff's request new staff teams have been formed in each room. Staff view this as a positive change to ensure the nursery continues to develop for the benefit of all children who attend. As of yet these are not having a positive impact on children's experience.

Staff 's limited knowledge of the learning outcomes for children combined with a lack of direction from previous management, impacts upon staff's ability to successfully support children in their learning. Resources are sparse throughout the nursery and staff have to borrow from one another's rooms to compensate. Staff are kind and caring towards children and sit with them at activities. They respond to children's questions, although in the pre-school room the staff fail to make effective use of opportunities to question children, effectively supporting and promoting their individual learning through play.

There are procedures in place to monitor and evaluate teaching and to check the quality and frequency of observations made on the children. However, these are not effective. There are gaps in recording children's progress. Therefore, staff

cannot use individual records to help identify children's learning priorities. Not all staff respond to children appropriately in order to help them progress. Children are assigned a key person and arrangements are in place to settle children and induct them into the group. For example, settling in plans are developed with parents and information about children's individual needs and interests are shared.

Recruitment is sufficiently robust to ensure that staff are checked and suitably qualified for their role. However, not all staff are fully aware about their responsibilities to keep children safe and promote their good health. For example, in the pre-school room children sit under tables playing with objects during story time and children are left unsupervised to rock a small aquarium with tadpoles in from side to side spilling water on themselves.

Staff provide opportunities for parents to feel welcome in the nursery. For example, parents are able to talk to their children's key person at any time. They have access to their children's records on request, and they are able to make ongoing written contributions about their children's progress in the setting and their learning at home. However, with significant gaps in the recording of children's observations, staff are unable to effectively assess the progress of each child and inform parents of future objectives for their child. The pre-school have not started to develop links with other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to ensure the different settings complement each other for the benefit of the children.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Younger children make their own choices about what they play with and the routine of the session provides opportunities for them to initiate their own activities. However, the provision does not support the needs of individual children. For example there are inconsistencies of experiences and opportunities for children throughout the nursery. All children who attend the nursery have access to a sparse range of resources and materials. Consequently, they are hindered in their learning as resources are stretched which impacts on the children's progress in the learning environment. Although most children are happy and staff are kind to them, children in the pre-school room are not routinely provided with activities that challenge them or sustain their interest. They occupy themselves for the vast majority of the time. For example children become bored with adult-led activities which are not suitable for their development, consequently children wander around the room occupying themselves. Children do not learn about what is acceptable behaviour because staff do not give explanations for unwanted behaviour, such as playing with objects under tables during story time or they choose to ignore it. This has an impact on children who want to listen to a story and are distracted by other children who go off on their own and play with other things. Younger children enjoy playing with playdough and are encouraged by committed staff who are interested in the children and extend their learning.

Staff in each room of the nursery gather information about children's individual care needs through discussion with the parents. However, observations on most of the children are inconsistent. This prevents staff from planning and organising individualised activities which cover each area of learning in sufficient breadth and

depth to ensure children make progress. Observations are then used by the whole staff team to plan a curriculum, however, this does not reflect the needs of all the children. Children with learning difficulties are not supported adequately as staff have not undertaken training to identify and support children with needs. Staff are unaware of children's home languages and do not provide opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in their play and learning.

Babies feel textures in books and show curiosity in looking at coloured liquid in clear plastic bottles. They use electronic toys as they begin to learn about everyday technology. Staff facilitate the younger children's play well, asking open-ended questions and knowing when to stand back and let the play develop, without interrupting the children. However, across the nursery children are not encouraged to count at every opportunity and recognise numerals. Children handle books with ease, however, these are limited across the nursery and many are damaged and ripped. Children use a range of tools with increasing control. For example, children use scissors, glue brushes and paint brushes with water during outdoor play to paint the fencing. Younger children benefit from the interaction with the adults. Staff participate in the activities, as they sit with the children at their level, engaging them in purposeful conversation and supporting and assisting them as necessary.

Children are beginning to learn about keeping themselves safe. For example, children practise regular fire drills to ensure they know how to evacuate the building quickly and safely during an emergency. Risk assessments are carried out in each room, however, children are left unsupervised in the pre-school room which compromises their health and safety. The setting provides a range of fresh fruit and nutritional meals for the children. In the pre-school room children are left to help themselves to fruit and pour their own drinks. This sometimes results in water spillages on the table and floor, which staff are oblivious to as they do not supervise the children appropriately. Children play in the book area throwing cushions and other children occupy themselves spinning metal objects on the floor to amuse themselves. Younger children are beginning to understand about healthy eating as staff talk with them about what types of food are good for them during snack time. The pre-schools outdoor activities do not have clear learning intentions. For example one ball is available for the whole group of children, to share in a game rolling it in between their legs. Consequently, practitioners fail to effectively teach children about the importance of physical activities and leave the majority of children to occupy themselves in the fresh air.

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

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	4
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	4
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	4

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	4
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	4
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	4
How well are children safeguarded?	4

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	4
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	4
How well are children helped to stay safe?	4
How well are children helped to be healthy?	4
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	4
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	4
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	4

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