



Three Bears Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY300030
Inspection date	31 October 2005
Inspector	Gill Thornton
Setting Address	Wilkinson Drive, Kesgrave, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP5 2ES
Telephone number	mobile 0771 830 4739
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Registered person	Kesgrave Three Bears Playgroup
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Three Bears Playgroup is managed by a voluntary management committee made up of parents of children at the playgroup. The group has been running for over 30 years. It relocated to new, purpose built premises adjacent to Cedarwood Primary School in Kesgrave in January 2005. A maximum of 22 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday morning during term time from 9:15 to 11:45 and from 12.30 to 15.00 Monday to Thursday, with a

lunchtime club in between. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 58 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these 46 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from the local community. The provision supports children with special educational needs.

The group employs 13 staff. There are 6 staff, including the manager who hold appropriate early years qualifications and 4 of the staff are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are beginning to learn the importance of good health and hygiene practices through the regular routines of the session. For example, staff remind children why they need to wash their hands after using the toilet and to put their hands over their mouth when they cough. Staff follow sound and consistent hygiene procedures, which protect children from infection. Children's health is promoted because staff follow the correct procedures for giving medication and recording accidents and all staff have either attended first aid training or are booked on an appropriate course.

Children's dietary needs are met at snack time through the provision of a range of mainly healthy snacks, which parents contribute to, for example, fruit, cheese, plain biscuits and breadsticks. Children are beginning to learn the importance of a healthy diet through discussions with staff about brushing their teeth and how food gives them energy. The group are in the process of implementing a cafeteria style snack time which children can access when they want, so helping them learn about meeting their own dietary needs.

Children enjoy a range of physical activities which contribute to a healthy lifestyle. Weather permitting they spend some time each day in the outside area. They enjoy taking part in activities to help them develop control of their bodies, for example, confidently using ride-on toys and joining in action games such as 'Simon Says'.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean, secure and well-maintained environment where they benefit from a range of safety measures. For example, staff carry out visual daily safety checks indoors and in the outside area and use a stair gate to prevent children's access to the kitchen area. Staff carefully monitor children's arrival and departure and ensure the main entrance is locked during sessions to prevent unauthorised access. Staff practise emergency evacuations with the children and ensure all fire exits are kept clear.

Children use suitable toys and equipment which meet safety standards. On outings they benefit from increased adult:child ratios and staff follow clear procedures to keep them safe. Planned discussions are used to develop children's understanding of keeping themselves safe, for example, road safety awareness.

Children's welfare is promoted because staff have either attended child protection training or are booked onto an appropriate course. Staff are aware of the correct procedures to follow if they have a concern and their child protection statement is shared with parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Most children settle well or are supported by staff to do so in the welcoming, child-friendly environment. Children make positive relationships with each other and staff who are caring and sensitive to children's individual needs. Children develop a sense of belonging because the group place emphasis on giving new children time to adjust to the routines of the setting.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

Children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. Senior staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and use this knowledge to plan a mainly appropriate range of activities to support children's learning. Adult focused activities identify appropriate stepping stones with individual staff taking responsibility for different sessions. However, some staff are not always clear about what they intend children to learn from an activity and rely upon the use of worksheets instead of practical play situations. Children's progress through the stepping stones is monitored in their assessment records, mainly through evaluating adult focused activities.

Children spend their time playing purposefully with a suitable range of toys and activities provided by staff on a daily basis. They are eager to participate in new activities, however, child accessible storage units are not used effectively to promote children's independence or ability to follow their own interests.

Children enjoy listening and responding to stories. Most children are confident communicators and use language as part of imaginary play. Staff encourage children to recognise their names and sound out initial letters in their names or words. Children take part in planned opportunities to develop pencil control. However, staff routinely name children's work for them and there is no clear writing area where children can freely access resources independently to develop their own skills and ideas.

Children count to 10 and beyond and enthusiastically take part in their favourite number rhymes, such as 'Peter Hammers'. They are developing problem solving skills and take part in planned activities and games involving number recognition.

Children use mathematical language such as big and little and recognise and identify shapes during their play.

Children are learning about life cycles and living things through topics on mini-beasts and activities such as observing chickens. They investigate and explore materials and texture and develop their designing skills through the competent use of a range of construction sets. Children develop their knowledge of information technology while using the computer and enjoy demonstrating their skills to their peers. Children become aware of the local community through trips and outings and topics such as 'My Neighbourhood'. They develop an awareness of other cultures and beliefs through celebrating different festivals such as Divali and Easter.

Children have opportunities to explore colour and texture, for example, mixing chalk with shaving foam. They enjoy taking part in a range of planned craft activities but do not routinely have free access to a range of resources and materials to develop their own creativity. Children use their imagination during various role play opportunities that are varied each week.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children understand the routines and rules of the setting and are encouraged by staff to show concern for others. Staff are good role models and their calm and consistent manner helps children understand the expected rules of behaviour. Children are learning to take turns and play together co-operatively, for example, sharing resources in the role play area. Children are developing a positive self-image through planned themes such as 'All about me'.

The setting has effective arrangements in place to care for children with special educational needs and the experienced Special Educational Needs Coordinator works closely with parents and other professionals to ensure children's specific needs are met.

Partnership with parents and carers is good.

Parents are very positive and complimentary about the group and most parents enjoy helping on the rota. Parents are kept well informed about the setting via regular newsletters and the notice board in the lobby. They receive comprehensive information on the Foundation Stage and the play leader supplies them with newsletters linked to topics with ideas to follow up at home to involve them in their children's learning. There are no formal opportunities to share children's records of progress, although parents are aware they can ask to see them.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Most of the required policies and procedures are in place and work in practice to promote children's health, welfare and development. However there are some discrepancies between practice and written procedures and omissions with regard to current legislation, for example, the complaints policy does not contain information about the requirement to maintain a log of complaints. All the required written consents and documents are maintained to ensure staff follow parents' wishes regarding their children's care.

The group are still adjusting to having their own premises, staff have been adapting and evaluating the environment to provide a good range of activities to meet children's needs. The room is well organised to allow children to move about freely and safely and the clear routines of the session help children to settle well. Good adult:child ratios are maintained to support children's care, learning and play.

Leadership and Management is satisfactory.

The manager is well qualified and minimum staffing qualification requirements are met. However, the large number of staff working during different sessions makes communication difficult. This results in some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching because staff have limited opportunities to share their practice with each other. Staff meetings are held to mainly inform planning. Support from the Early Education Support Team helps evaluate the provision for nursery education.

Staff are aware of their own roles and responsibilities and are deployed effectively within the setting, spending the majority of their time interacting with children and supporting their play. However, new staff do not undergo formal induction procedures and staff appraisals have not taken place recently, so impacting on the professional development of less experienced staff.

Overall, the needs of the children who attend the provision are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At their previous nursery education inspection the group agreed to develop children's access to programmable toys and include children's assessment records when planning the next step to ensure that all children progress. Children now have regular access to a computer and the group have purchased a range of electronic toys to improve children's access to resources reflecting everyday technology. The group have started implementing the provision of individual play plans to identify individual children's next steps in learning to help them make progress in all areas.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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.

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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):

- ensure policies and procedures are updated in line with current regulations and reflect practice, particularly recruitment and induction procedures, complaints procedures, lost child policy and medication policy.

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):

- ensure regular appraisals are undertaken for all staff to promote their professional development especially with regard to increasing their understanding of how children learn through practical experiences
- improve opportunities for children to develop their independence and access toys and resources of their own choosing, particularly regarding craft resources and writing materials.

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