

Three Bears Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY300030
Inspection date 11/05/2010
Inspector Martyn Richards

Setting address Wilkinson Drive, Kesgrave, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP5 2ES

Telephone number 0771 830 4739

Email

Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2009

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.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

Description of the setting

Three Bears Playgroup was registered in 2004. It is managed by a committee of parents and occupies purpose built accommodation adjacent to Cedarwod Primary School, in the Kesgrave district of Ipswich. It also has access to an adjoining outdoor activity area. The playgroup is registered to take up to 34 children aged from two to five years, at any one time. On the day of the inspection 26 children were present. Altogether there are 70 children on roll. The playgroup welcomes children with learning difficulties and disabilities and has suitable access and facilities for them. It also supports children learning English as an additional language. It opens on each weekday during school term times, from 9.15am to 11.45am and from 12.30pm to 3.00pm and it runs a daily lunchtime club between the sessions. The playgroup receives some funding for nursery education. There are nine staff, including the manager. All but one of the members of staff have appropriate childcare qualifications and the majority hold higher level qualifications. The manager has Early Years Professional Status. The playgroup has close links with its adjoining primary school and with local authority support agencies. It is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Three Bears Playgroup provides a safe, happy and well led environment in which children's individual needs are catered for very effectively. The playgroup is safe and welcoming. Children enjoy their time there and build strong relations with staff and especially with their Key Persons. In this very inclusive setting, staff have the skills, training and specialist support to be able to meet the needs of children with learning difficulties, disabilities, or unfamiliarity with English. The managing committee and the staff are keen to make the provision for the children even better. They have acted vigorously on the recommendations of their last inspection, established a thorough self evaluation system and undertaken a significant range of additional training. The implementation of statutory requirements for children in the early years age group has been handled very well. The playgroup has a good capacity to continue improving in the future.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- update and review the self evaluation schedule to emphasise the impact of provision on children's achievements and to give a sharper indication of key priorities for future development
- use successive assessments of children's achievements to show the development, over time, of particular strands of their learning

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The management committee and the staff of the playgroup rightly give the highest priority to ensuring the children's safety. The accommodation and outdoor areas are well secured against intrusion and against children slipping out unseen. Staff conduct regular and rigorous risk assessments, both daily and annually, to identify and manage any potential hazards the children might face. Visitors must sign in and out from the playgroup and the suitability and qualifications of all adults working with the children are carefully checked. Children take part in regular fire drills and emergency evacuation procedures are clearly displayed. Emergency exits are unobstructed. The manager has overall responsibility for child protection, but all staff have had recent update training. They know the importance of staying alert for indications of possible ill treatment and how to respond in these circumstances. There is a strong and effective Key Person scheme, by which every child is allocated to a named staff member, who has responsibility for overseeing the child's welfare and progress, for liaising closely with parents and for planning individual next steps in the child's learning.

The playgroup welcomes all children and ensures that they can all benefit from the full range of opportunities it offers. Staff work closely with advisory agencies and the local authority to make certain children with learning difficulties or disabilities receive the support they need and that the playgroup's provision is consistent with that of the other provisions helping the children. Several children come to the playgroup who are learning English as an additional language. They quickly make friends and settle into this friendly and caring community. Staff have had initial training in ways of supporting children learning English as an additional language and more is planned. There are good links with the adjoining primary school and this means children's learning and personal needs are recognised before admission. This helps ease their transition into school. Links with parents are also strong. In addition to open evenings, there are occasional surveys for parents, and a newsletter to update them on the playgroup's activities.

This is a self critical playgroup, with a determination to make its good practice even better. The recently appointed manager has a clear view of its strengths and weaknesses, encourages further staff training and has implemented a thorough performance management programme. A very thorough self evaluation process, conducted by the previous manager and the parents' committee, is in place. It rightly notes that the outside areas need improvement if they are to make the fullest contribution to the children's activity programme and a schedule is in hand to achieve this. The self evaluation form, however, requires updating and some further refinement, to identify more sharply those future improvements which will have the most impact on learning, development and the welfare of the children.

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

Children look forward to coming to the playgroup and from the moment they arrive, they settle happily into the activities set out for them. Some go straight to the role play area and put on dressing up clothes. One comments that her favourite colours are pink, red, scarlet and purple. She then selects clothes to match her complex colour scheme. Other children gather around the tadpoles which have recently hatched and comment excitedly on what they notice. Small pots of cress seeds have germinated beside the tadpoles' table. Children can wonder at the growth and development of both plants and animals. Other children go to play on the floor road map, showing patience as several want the same toys. Yet others paint pictures and one designs a simple picture for her reception class teacher. Some children want simply to chat calmly to one of the staff, or practice pretend writing in the mark making area.

Staff planning of play and learning activities is good. They provide a balance of activities children may choose for themselves, with new starting points introduced by adults. Each day provides play opportunities both indoors and outside. Staff are clear about what children might learn from these varied activities. They play and chat alongside the children, helping sensitively to move learning forward, following the children's interests, without taking the initiative from them. They note how children respond to the activities they undertake, studying the difficulties they face, or the new enthusiasms they show. Staff record these significant moments in writing, or through photographs, and make suggestions about what future activities might best meet a child's individual needs. These observations, collected together over time, present a clear picture of the good progress children make in the playgroup and this information is shared with parents. Staff should use successive assessments to show the development over time of different strands of learning and use this to plan future activities.

The children behave well and approach new activities eagerly and energetically. Their helpfulness and friendliness make a positive contribution to the calm ethos of the playgroup. The children love singing and painting, know many traditional nursery rhymes and listen calmly while adults tell stories. They grow in confidence to put forward their own ideas and they show maturity and independence in their selection of activities. They move around the room with consideration for others and use brushes and other implements safely. Most can make pencil marks using a secure grip and staying within the boundaries of the paper. As they get older they make some recognisable letters, or write their own names. Most can select their name label from a collection of labels and some can sound some of the letters in their name. The children can count confidently up to 10 or above and know common regular shapes such as circles, squares and triangles. They know the importance of regular hand washing and they enjoy their healthy snacks of fruit, milk, water and a biscuit. Vigorous outdoor play, especially using wheeled play vehicles, is very popular and promotes physical fitness. In the outdoor area they refine their coordination in jumping, balancing and hopping. The positive attitudes and the new skills they acquire in this playgroup will stand them in good stead in their future education.

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?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
--	---

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	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

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