

Little Bears Pre-School

Tollgate Cp School, Tollgate Lane, BURY ST. EDMUNDS, Suffolk, IP32 6DG

Inspection date

05/02/2013

Previous inspection date

Not Applicable

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

1

Previous inspection:

Not Applicable

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend	1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children	1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision	1

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is outstanding

- All children are well motivated and show high levels of concentration and curiosity in the vibrant and inspiring learning environment provided at the pre-school. Consequently, children play a dynamic role in their own learning, offer their own ideas and respond to challenge with enthusiasm.
- All staff are highly skilled and sensitive in helping children form strong emotional attachments. They place high priority on promoting children's personal, social and emotional development to provide a strong base for children's developing independence and future learning. As a result, children are happy, eager to learn and become very confident and independent for their age.
- Children are exceptionally well prepared for school because of the sharp focus given to helping them acquire strong communication and language skills while supporting their ability to play cooperatively with others.
- Monitoring of children's educational progress is rigorous and informs practice. Assessment of all children is precise, sharply focused and includes all those involved in children's learning. As a result, all children receive timely intervention and support to help them achieve their full potential.
- Highly successful ways of engaging all parents in their children's learning results in parents being actively involved in supporting their children's progress in the pre-school and at home.
- All children make significant progress in their learning given their starting points and capabilities because staff have an excellent knowledge of how children learn.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are scheduled:

- at least once in every inspection cycle. The current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged as inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage; or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised for inspection where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the playroom and outside area.
- The inspector discussed the findings of a joint observation of a physical education lesson with the early years professional.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager and early years professional and spoke to staff and children.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records and planning documentation.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of staff working with children, the provider's self-evaluation and improvement plan and other documentation.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day and information included in the self-evaluation documents.

Inspector

Gill Thornton

Full Report

Information about the setting

Little Bears Pre-school was re-registered under new ownership in 2012 on the Early Years Register. It operates from a classroom in Tollgate Primary School in Bury St Edmunds, and is privately owned. The pre-school serves the local area and has strong links with the primary school. It is accessible to all children via a ramp to the school and there is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The pre-school employs four members of childcare staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and above, including the deputy manager who holds Early Years Professional Status. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday during term time only. Sessions are from 9am until 12noon each morning and from 12.45pm until 3.15pm on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 31 children attending who are in the early years age group. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children and it receives support from the local authority. The pre-school supports a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- enhance opportunities for children to explore their natural environment, such as by implementing plans to develop the nature area.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

The cohesive staff team, led by the dynamic early years professional, have a comprehensive understanding of child development and an expert knowledge of how children learn and make progress. They use this knowledge to provide children with consistently inspiring teaching strategies to support their progress towards the early learning goals. Children thrive and make significant gains in their learning because staff provide rich and varied play experiences based firmly upon children's individual interests and capabilities. Children direct their own learning and confidently offer their own ideas

about how tackle a chosen task. For example, staff use children's current interests to plan a puppet making activity. This is used as an effective opportunity to help children learn to solve simple problems and use their designing skills as they work out how to create the puppet of their choice.

Children confidently select toys and activities that motivate and interest them from the imaginatively resourced indoor and outdoor learning environment. Staff are quick to respond the children's changing interests. They effectively adapt their questioning skills and interactions dependent upon individual children's stage of development. For example, staff sensitively use a younger child's interest in the play dough to help extend their vocabulary and understanding of shapes. Older children confidently ask questions about how things work and staff use this as a real opportunity to help children learn to clarify their thoughts and ideas about things that are important to them. Sessions are divided by age group, with the older three- to four-year-old children attending in the morning and two- to three-year olds in the afternoon. This means that teaching strategies and learning activities can be more finely tuned to individual children's stages of development

Key persons complete regular and precise assessment of children's progress. Planning is sharply focused on individual children's interests and abilities and includes all those involved in children's learning, such as speech and language therapists. Well-planned and imaginatively led whole-group activities provide excellent learning opportunities for all children. For example, a well-paced morning registration activity teaches children conventions of conversation as they talk about items they have brought relating to the 'Letter of the week'. This thoughtfully planned activity effectively supports children's understanding of letter sounds and reflects how phonics are taught in the school. Children are eager to demonstrate their counting skills to staff and their peers as part of the registration routine. Later in the morning they play at acting out the same activity with their friends with one taking the role of 'teacher'. At the end of each morning session children divide into two groups to take part in age-appropriate adult-led sessions in either numeracy or literacy. Staff use strategies learnt from the 'Every child a talker programme' to further support children's communication and language skills. These activities all contribute significantly to providing children with the skills, attitudes and dispositions they need to be ready for their move to school.

Children have easy access to the outdoor environment provided within a partitioned off section of the school playground. Here they explore a wealth of learning experiences as well as developing their physical skills. The staff team recognise that the outdoor environment does not provide children with many opportunities to explore their natural environment. They have addressed this by providing some natural materials and involving children in composting their own food waste. Further plans are in place to develop a nature area to enhance children's experiences and understanding of the natural world.

Children engage in many opportunities to practise their early writing skills as well as exploring books and finding out about the world around them. They play together cooperatively, sharing ideas and making suggestions, such as when sharing the torches in the 'dark den' and discovering when they work best. Staff provide many opportunities to involve parents in their children's learning. Daily diaries are used effectively to share information between home and the pre-school. Parents contribute to their children's

assessment records and share in identifying their children's next steps in developmental progress. As a result, parents are actively engaged in supporting their children's learning at home and in the pre-school.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Highly successful settling-in procedures ensure children are confident and secure within the pre-school. A flexible starting time for individual children and staggered starting dates eases transitions into the pre-school, especially for children finding it hard to separate from their parents. Staff work sensitively with parents to find out about children's family life and their prior learning experiences so they can provide individualised levels of support appropriate to each child's needs. Staff are highly skilled and sensitive in helping children form strong emotional attachments. They place high priority on developing strong and trusting relationships with the whole family to provide a strong base for children's developing independence. There is a strong continuity of care as there is minimal staff turnover and high staff ratios at each session. All staff use Makaton sign language within their everyday interactions. They teach all the children how to form signs and they use a symbols chart to help less verbal children make choices. As a result, all children are very well supported in their acquisition of language and communication skills.

Children show increasingly high levels of confidence in social situations and become very independent and self-assured for their age. Staff are excellent role models. They consistently offer clear guidance on what is acceptable behaviour and ensure children are provided with the strategies needed to be able to solve simple disputes for themselves. As a result, children learn to negotiate and respect each other's views while reminding each other of the simple rules on how to behave in the group.

All staff consistently give the highest priority to promoting children's safety and helping children learn to keep themselves safe. Staff use simple, yet effective strategies to support children's understanding of safe practices. For example, introducing the inspector to the children as a 'safe' adult and explaining this means they can trust them and talk to them. Children are learning to take responsibility for their own safety because staff help them learn to assess the potential risks involved in certain tasks. For example, older children play together cooperatively outside, using a plank of wood to create more physical challenge, and discuss whether it is safe to climb on or what they need to do make it safe.

Staff effectively support children's growing understanding of the importance of physical exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle. Children relish their time outdoors. They competently climb, balance and pedal, while developing good levels of coordination and control of their bodies. They take part in weekly physical education lessons and they form teams and cheer each other on as they develop ball skills and negotiate obstacles. As a result, children learn to understand the effects of exercise on their bodies and to appreciate the benefits of being outside. Children enjoy healthy options at snack time and develop the confidence to try unfamiliar items, such as dragon fruit. The well-organised snack time provides many opportunities for children to take responsibility for small tasks as well as promoting their understanding of what constitutes a healthy diet.

Children manage their own personal hygiene well and are very independent. They are able to dress themselves for outdoor play, changing their shoes and attempting to fasten their own coats. Younger children receive sensitive help and support because staff are very attentive. Children are learning to respect their own cultures and beliefs and those of others. The pre-school ensure festivals and special events relevant to the families that attend the group are valued and respected. Parents and visitors are invited in to talk to the children about their experiences. Outings into the local community support children's understanding the world around them. For example, staff took a small group of children to the bank to pay in sponsorship money raised by the pre-school.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

Leadership in the pre-school is inspirational. The pursuit of excellence in all that the pre-school does is demonstrated by a highly successful and well-documented drive to ensure high levels of achievement by all children. For example, the early years professional has introduced an exemplary system of monitoring and tracking children's progress to ensure they are all progressing well, and in some cases exceeding their expected levels of development. Any identified gaps in achievement are quickly identified and acted upon so that timely intervention is sought and any gaps are closing. Planning and assessment is effectively monitored to ensure it is precise and sharply focused to ensure every child receives an individualised and motivating learning experience that supports their ongoing development in all areas.

The manager/owner of the pre-school takes overall responsibility for ensuring the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage are effectively met. Arrangements for safeguarding children are very strong and embedded in practice. All staff have a comprehensive understanding of their responsibilities to promote children's welfare and safety. They are supported by well-implemented and effective policies and procedures which ensure children's safety and well-being. The change in management structure, as a result of the re-registration of the pre-school, has had a positive impact on the quality of the provision. For example, having the highest qualified member of staff working directly with the children and overseeing the learning and development requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage successfully contributes to the high-quality educational programmes. Robust recruitment and induction procedures, combined with meaningful staff supervision, have resulted in a highly effective and well-deployed staff team. Sharply focused evaluations of the impact of staff's practice and a targeted programme for professional development ensure staff are consistently improving their already first rate practice. As a result, all children are provided with an exemplary learning experience and their care needs are exceptionally well met.

Vigorous and effective systems of self-evaluation inform the pre-school's priorities for development and are used to set challenging targets for improvement. The early years professional introduces various monitoring systems which involve all staff in evaluating the quality of the provision and the impact on children's learning. For example, in light of the increased numbers of two-year-old children attending the pre-school, staff evaluated the

learning environment from a two-year-old child's eye level. Older children are involved in reviewing and evaluating the week's activities and contribute their ideas to the following week's planning. Parents' and children's views are actively sought and acted upon to target areas for development. For example, in response to a parent's request to help children learn to write, the Early Years Professional held an open session for parents on how to help children start to form letters and explained the phonics system used within the school. The pre-school have developed well-established partnerships with the local children's centre and other professionals working with individual children. Senior staff attend multi-disciplinary meetings to support families and ensure children receive consistent support. Effective systems are in place to share information with other early years settings attended by children to ensure continuity of care and learning.

The pre-school staff work effectively with parents and schools to prepare children for their transition into school. For example, during their last half term in pre-school the children bring a packed lunch which they eat with staff in the school dining hall. They visit the school with staff to familiarise themselves with the environment and reception teachers are invited to visit the pre-school. As result, children feel more confident about the next stage of their learning. Parents and carers spoken to during the inspection are highly complementary of every aspect of the pre-school. Many speak of the excellent progress their children have made and thank the friendly and approachable staff for all their effort and the support they provide for the whole family. Many parents commented that the reason they had chosen to keep their children in pre-school instead of sending them to school nursery was because staff knew their children so well and taught them so much.

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement

Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement

	is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not Met	The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY453143
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	881879
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	20
Number of children on roll	31
Name of provider	Keren Thomas
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
Telephone number	07884457563

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises that are usually their own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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