

Best Friends Childcare

Francis Bacon School, Drakes Drive, ST. ALBANS, Hertfordshire, AL1 5AR

Inspection date	19/12/2013
Previous inspection date	24/04/2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	3
	Previous inspection:	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		3
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		3
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		3

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision requires improvement

- Children form secure attachments with staff who provide a caring and supportive environment for them. They are keen to explore and independently select resources to play with as well as the resources set out for them.
- Staff generally take positive steps to ensure children feel safe and protected in the nursery and they are provided with consistent messages so that they learn to play safely.
- There is a positive relationship with children's parents. Staff are friendly and share what they know about their children daily.

It is not yet good because

- The procedures for induction and monitoring new staff's knowledge are not rigorous enough to ensure all staff are fully aware of the nursery's policies and procedures.
- Information gained from assessment is not consistently used to build on older children's interests to successfully plan well for the next steps in their learning.
- Staff do not consistently use effective teaching methods to promote children with English as an additional language and younger children's communication and language skills, so that children can express their thoughts and feelings.
- Opportunities to enhance children's learning during story sessions and promote self-care skills during meal and snack times are not fully explored.

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
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged 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 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
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the children's activities both indoors and outdoors and observed interactions between staff and children during the day.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the deputy.
The inspector spoke with the deputy and staff members at convenient times. She
- looked at and discussed a range of policies and procedures including the safeguarding and recruitment procedures and the induction procedures.
The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of staff working with
- children. She also discussed their improvement plan and the impact this is having on children's learning and development.

Inspector

Maura Pigram

Full report

Information about the setting

Best Friends Childcare was registered in 2012 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. It is one of two nurseries operated by the provider. The nursery is situated in a purposely converted building in the grounds of the Samuel Ryder Academy on the outskirts of St Albans. Children are cared for in two playrooms. There is an enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The nursery opens Monday to Friday 7.30am until 6.30pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery is open all year round apart from Christmas and bank holidays. There are currently 29 children on roll who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The nursery supports children, who speak English as an additional language.

The Best Friend Club operates from a portable classroom alongside the day nursery. Staff from the day nurseries operated by the provider manage the club. It offers a breakfast club from 8am until children go into school. The after school club provides care until 6.30pm and caters for children staying for after school activities. The holiday club operates during school holidays from 7.30am until 6.30pm.

The nursery employs nine members of childcare staff and a cook. The provider works as the manager. She holds a level 6 qualification in early years and Early Years Professional Status. Five staff members hold level 3 early years qualifications and one staff member is working towards this.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- improve the induction programme so that those new to the nursery are fully aware of the nursery's safeguarding policies and procedures, such as awareness of the whistleblowing procedures and who holds the designated safeguarding role
- develop assessments so that information gained is effectively used to plan challenging and enjoyable experiences to support the next steps in older children's learning.

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

- increase staff's knowledge of how children learn and develop so that they are aware of strategies to use to help children make good progress in their learning, such as reviewing group sizes during story sessions, using open-questions and effectively using visual aids during story times and imaginative play
- develop the use of time-lines, pictures and photographs showing familiar events, objects and activities so that younger children and those with English as an additional language can be further supported and express their preferences, thoughts and feelings about the activities and their play opportunities
- provide further opportunities for children to be involved in the preparation and serving of food and drinks so that their independence and confidence in their own abilities can be extended.

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

Children benefit from an appropriate range of experiences which cover all areas of learning. They are happy and quickly settle to see their friends and staff. Children confidently explore the environment. Since the last inspection a new staff team are in place. They are bonding well together and are becoming confident in their roles and responsibilities. They have learnt baby sign so they can support children who use this method of communication. This supports children's emerging language and helps children settle in. Staff know children well and are able to talk about how they are moving children on in their next stages of development. They are always on hand to offer support and guidance and generally children are helped to progress in their learning as they play. All children show that they are developing a keen interest in books. This supports their early reading skills. Following lunch, they eagerly choose their favourite books for the attentive

staff to read. They all sit on the floor together and some good interactions by the reader means that some older children eagerly join in. However, some children lose interest because the group is too big and visual aids to support the story are not used. This means that the quality of teaching is not fully effective. Staff regularly read stories to children. Younger children sit together and point to familiar pictures and some children try to repeat what staff are saying. Some strategies are in place to support children who are learning English as an additional language, such as the use of sign language and obtaining key words used at home. This helps children settle and develops their language skills. However, staff have not fully explored other ways to support some children to express their interests and ideas, such as by using time-lines, props, visual cues, pictures and real-life objects.

Children demonstrate that they are developing sound skills to aid their readiness for school. For example, they engage in adult-led activities and confidently use the resources set out for them. They choose to play imaginatively with a varied range of toy animals, dolls and interactive cars. Children concentrate for long periods of time as they draw objects of their choice. Some good quality questioning enables children to make connections in their learning. For example, discussions take place about the drawing and other features that could be included. However, the quality of effective teaching is variable, resulting in some children making satisfactory rather than good progress. For example, the use of open questions to help children challenge their thoughts and ideas further are not consistent across the whole team. Staff appropriately encourage children's exploration during their play. For example, younger children enjoy playing in the cosy den, staff play peek-a-boo which results in lots of laughter. This supports children's personal, social and emotional development. When younger children are playing with sand, a staff member introduces the concept of adding water. This promotes further learning and enables children to create marks in the popular activity. Problem-solving skills are supported during construction. Children choose to make models of their choice, such as dinosaurs. Outdoors children use play bricks and co-operatively build a model together. Since the last inspection, the manager and staff are focusing on developing the outdoor area so that varied learning opportunities are provided. For example, staff now bring additional resources, such as painting and construction bricks outdoors. Staff caring for older children attending the holiday and extended care sessions are enthusiastic. They know the children and their interests well. They include children in the planning of activities to ensure that their learning needs are effectively met. For example, staff ensure appropriate resources that children request are set out for them prior to their arrival so that they can quickly settle to play and learn.

Staff are continuing to develop their knowledge of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff who are caring for babies have recently attended training related to effective planning for this age group. They are implementing the knowledge gained and state that this is showing to be successful. Staff caring for older children are in the process of reviewing their methods of planning. As a result, they show that they have an acceptable understanding of the learning and development requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, information gained from assessment is not consistently used to plan for children's next steps in learning. Parents contribute to initial assessments by providing useful information about what their children's routines, what their children know and their likes and dislikes. Daily discussions

and opportunities to see their children's learning and development files means that parents are regularly informed about their children's progress. In addition, they are advised about how their children settle and any relevant developmental issues are discussed frequently. This means that there is a continuity of care and learning between staff and children's parents.

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

Children enjoy warm relationships with the staff and show that they feel settled and secure as a result. They smile broadly when adults talk to them showing close attachments. A key person system is in place. Staff ensure that an ongoing dialogue with parents takes place to ensure continuity of care and well-being, such as changes in sleep routines. Information about children's welfare and routines is gathered on registration. This includes, dietary and medical needs. Appropriate steps are taken to ensure all staff are aware of children's individual needs, such as allergies and food preferences. Parents are complimentary about the service provided. For example, they say, 'my child loves it here, my child has come on loads' and 'my child settled really well'. As a result, children form secure attachments and there is a continuity of care between children's parents and the staff. This supports children's personal, social and emotional development. Babies and toddlers are able to sleep according to their needs. Children new to the nursery and those transferring between rooms show good levels of confidence and enjoyment. They visit their new room regularly and happily join in with adult-guided activities and confidently play with resources set out for them. Older children transferring to school are appropriately supported. For example, school uniforms of schools where children may attend are available in the dressing-up box so that children can become familiar with these. In addition, teachers of the nearby schools are invited into the nursery so that they can meet the children before they start. This means that teachers gain an insight into children's individual needs.

Staff work very well together. For example, they adopt a consistent approach to children's behaviour. As a result, children know what is expected of them. For example, they make sure they have enough room to put their shoes and coats on without bumping into each other. Children developing independent skills, such as putting on their own shoes and say 'are my shoes on the right feet' as they get ready to go outdoors. Staff praise children for their achievements. This promotes their self-esteem. Children are encouraged to behave well and to be considerate to their friends. For example, older children are involved in setting their own rules for acceptable behaviour. In addition, staff talk to children about the importance of sharing and being friends as they play. Staff caring for older children use effective distraction techniques to resolve issues. For example, they encourage cooperative play for children who sometimes find it difficult to get on with each other. This contributes appropriately to preparing children for the next stage in their learning, such as mixing with others when they start school. Children receive consistent messages from all staff on what is acceptable behaviour along with lots of praise and encouragement. Any issues are discussed with parents so that they and staff can work together to help children manage their emotions effectively.

The nursery is clean, food preparation and mealtimes foster good hygiene procedures. The majority of staff have attended food hygiene training to promote this effectively. Meals are eaten at the table and social skills are effectively encouraged. However, there is scope to involve children more fully in the preparation of mealtimes so that learning and independent skills are further developed. For example, children have limited opportunities to lay the table, make choices about the food they eat and to pour their own drinks. Hygiene routines are promoted appropriately. For example, older children learn about healthy lifestyles and independently attend to their personal needs and know to wash their hands before eating. Babies are supported to develop self-feeding skills and their milk bottles are stored appropriately. Children are developing a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe because they receive consistent messages on safety. For example, they know to check other children are not playing nearby so that they can safely play ball games. As a result, they are learning to manage risks in their environment. Children's understanding of safety is further supported during daily routines and on bus outings. Prior to outings children are reminded how to keep safe and they are supervised effectively. For example, high ratios are maintained so that there is one adult to two children. Children's playrooms are consistently reviewed to ensure that resources are easily available. For example, the home area is under development so that this is an inviting place for children to explore. Resources are of good quality and are always checked to ensure that this standard is maintained.

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

This inspection was brought forward due to Ofsted's recent investigation of concerns related to safeguarding issues. At inspection the manager was meeting the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements in relation to the safeguarding concern. However, the induction procedures are not sufficiently robust. For example, the manager does not ensure that information provided at induction is fully understood by staff new to the nursery to ensure that they are clear about all safeguarding issues, such as, the whistleblowing procedure and who the designated safeguarding person is. This is a breach of a welfare requirement and as a result an action has been raised related to this. Core staff at the nursery show that they have an appropriate understanding of safeguarding children procedures. For example, they have a secure knowledge of the indicators of abuse and know who to contact should they be concerned about the welfare of a child. Since the concern came to the attention of the manager she initiated safeguarding training for all staff. In addition, arrangements for notifying outside agencies concerning safeguarding issues and the whistle blowing procedures are now clearly known. Any concerns related to children's welfare are taken seriously and fully investigated to ensure that children are fully protected and safeguarded. The manager generally has an adequate understanding of most requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. For example, safe recruitment procedures ensure all those working with children are safe to do so. Regular supervision meetings, probationary periods and appraisals are in place so

that training needs are identified. For example, staff have attended baby signing training and this has had a positive impact on how quickly children settle in to the nursery. The manager is keen to support the staff in continuous professional development and some staff are completing childcare qualifications. Risk assessments are regularly carried out for all areas and for outings. Any potential hazards, such as the faulty external door are monitored and reported so that this can be amended as quickly as possible. Internal doors have secure key pads and children are always supervised to ensure they are safe as possible at all times.

Monitoring of the nursery is generally effective and is an ongoing process. However, a learning and development requirement is not fully met as staff do not consistently consider the interests and stage of development when planning activities for older children. Self-evaluation includes views of staff, children and parents contribute to this through discussions and staff meetings. Plans for progression are well-known. For example, maximising the outdoor play area more fully so that the service provided continually improves. This was a previous recommendation and is been appropriately addressed so that opportunities to further support children's learning are met.

Staff work well in partnership with parents and carers to ensure children's individual needs are met. Information is continually shared and exchanged about children's care, both verbally and in written daily diary documents. Parents spoken to on the day of inspection speak well of the nursery and the impact the staff have had on their children's development. For example, they state that their child is 'very sociable since coming to nursery'. The nursery have developed partnerships with a nearby school so that the move to next stage in children's learning can be run as smooth as possible. There are no children attending who attend other provisions. However, the manager and the staff value partnership working and the impact this can have on children's welfare and learning. For example, they seek advice from outside agencies. As a result, specialist professionals, such as speech therapists visit the nursery. They provide guidance to staff so that they can meet all children's individual needs.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

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	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. 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 monitored and inspected again within six 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	EY449240
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	948496
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	27
Number of children on roll	29
Name of provider	Bestfriends Childcare Centre Ltd
Date of previous inspection	24/04/2013
Telephone number	01727 847475

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance '*Complaints procedure: raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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, which are usually the childminder's 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.

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 assesses 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 4234, 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.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

