

Inspection of Bears Den

Venning Barracks, Donnington, TELFORD, Shropshire TF2 8JT

Inspection date: 28 March 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Leaders and staff welcome all children. They operate a flexible approach to support children's attendance. This helps children of all ages and abilities to feel happy, safe and settle well. Children start their day with their key persons where they partake in focused activities before mixing with other children from different rooms. This helps to build on their confidence as they learn and play together. Additionally, it prepares them for what to expect when transitioning into the next room.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, staff focus their teaching on children's physical skills. This means children have numerous opportunities to enhance their fine motor and gross motor skills. Staff plan new ways to challenge children's movements. For example, children squeeze play dough in their hands to strengthen their finger muscles, and move 'like a crab' around a purposefully built obstacle course. This helps them to strengthen the muscles they need to hold a pencil to later write.

Staff's interactions increase children's focus and concentration. This means children engage well in their learning and are quick to act on instruction. Staff remind children to use their 'kind hands' with their peers to promote children's positive behaviour. Furthermore, children learn sign language to help them to make their needs known. For example, at snack time they sign 'milk' and 'water'. This means they have choice and can self-select.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- Respectful relationships between staff and children are evident. Staff adapt their teaching to ensure that children of all ages can partake in activities. For instance, younger children receive time and support to evaluate risks on an obstacle course. This positively builds their self-confidence. However, at times, key persons do not provide staff in other rooms with enough information about individual children's development. This means staff cannot consistently build on what children know and can do throughout the day.
- Leaders work with schoolteachers to understand their expectations for children's learning in the reception year, such as the need for children to develop self-care skills and independence. However, on occasion staff carry out simple tasks for children during mealtimes which they are more than capable to do themselves, such as unzipping their lunch box and pouring their drinks. This does not help to prepare children for their next stage of learning.
- Observations and assessments help key persons to identify children's starting points and monitor their progress. Together with parents they discuss children's interests and any changes which may impact learning. This helps them to plan suitably challenging activities and respond to children's and their families'

specific needs. For example, staff teach parents sign language to enable them to further communicate with their children at home.

- Partnership with parents is good. Parents are kept up to date regarding their children's learning. They speak highly of the transition process and value the 'communication book' key persons use to create a two-way flow of communication.
- The manager, who is also the special educational needs coordinator, has a wealth of experience which enables her to assist and advise staff in how to support those children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This includes working with other professionals to ensure that children's needs are identified early and targeted quickly.
- Children learn about similarities and differences between themselves and others. For instance, they celebrate religious festivals, such as 'St David's Day' and learn new languages, including Welsh. Additionally, staff invite visitors into the setting, such as the postal worker for children to learn about occupations. This helps children to develop a strong awareness of people and communities.
- Leaders demonstrate how funding is spent to benefit the different groups of children who attend the setting. For example, staff attend training which enables them to deliver a 'communication screening tool' to strengthen children's speech and language skills. Leaders measure the impact funding has on children's outcomes. This helps them to identify where teaching can be further improved.
- Leaders work in the rooms to help maintain staff-to-child ratios. This means that staff receive continuous coaching and modelling, so they can continuously improve their practice, knowledge and understanding.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff have secure knowledge of different types of abuse and key indicators for concern. They know the correct procedures to follow should they have concerns about a child's welfare, including allegations against another staff member. There are procedures in place to minimise risks indoors and outdoors. For example, children hold a 'safety rope' when partaking in a walk. Staff remind children not to walk with their hands in their pockets, and the importance of chewing their food well. This helps to keep children safe and reduce accidents.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- ensure that key persons share more information with other staff about children's individual next steps to promote consistency in children's learning throughout the day
- reflect on staff practice during mealtimes to provide children with more

opportunities to do things for themselves to prepare them for the next stage of learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY381013
Local authority	Telford & Wrekin
Inspection number	10280154
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	40
Number of children on roll	41
Name of registered person	Bears Den Pre-School Partnership
Registered person unique reference number	RP902710
Telephone number	01952672506
Date of previous inspection	15 September 2017

Information about this early years setting

Bears Den originally registered in 1994 and re-registered as a partnership in 2008. The pre-school operates from the Ministry of Defence in Donnington, Telford. The pre-school employs nine members of childcare staff. Of these, eight hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and one holds a qualification at level 2. They open from Monday to Friday, from 9am until 3pm, during term time. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Mikaela Stallard

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager, deputy manager and the inspector completed a learning walk.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the deputy manager.
- The inspector observed the interactions between staff and children throughout the day and evaluated the impact on children's learning.
- The inspector held discussions with the manager, staff, and children at appropriate times during the inspection. The views of parents were considered by the inspector through verbal discussions.
- Relevant documentation was reviewed by the inspector, including evidence of the suitability of those working with children.

We carried out this inspection 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.

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