

Little Bears Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	106349
Inspection date	27 March 2008
Inspector	Pamela Woodhouse
Setting Address	Shebbear Community School, Shebbear, Beaworthy, Devon, EX21 5SG
Telephone number	07890 814564
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Registered person	Little Bears Pre School (Shebbear)
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Bears Pre-School opened in approximately 1970 and operates from a Portakabin at Shebbear Community School. It has the use of a secure, enclosed area for outside play. Shebbear village is in the triangle between the towns of Holsworthy, Hatherleigh and Great Torrington, Devon. A maximum of 14 children may attend the setting at any one time which is open during term time on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, from 09.00 to 12.30 hours, and on Tuesday and Thursday from 09.00 to 15.15 hours.

There are currently 10 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, eight receive funding for early education. Children attend from the village and surrounding areas.

The pre-school, which is managed by a committee of parents and interested others, employs two members of staff, both of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from Devon Education Services Early Years Advisors and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is promoted well because suitable steps are taken to reduce their risk to the spread of infection. These include implementing a comprehensive sickness policy, keeping parents informed of any illnesses circulating and making sure that the children's environment, their toys and any equipment used by them are clean. Staff keep their first aid certificates up-to-date so that their knowledge and procedures are in line with current practices to enable them to administer basic first aid to the children as appropriate. Recording procedures ensure that parents are kept fully informed about any intervention taken by staff for the well-being of their children and their countersignature provides a check to ensure that this has been done. Good hygiene procedures help to prevent cross-infection and children are beginning to learn about this through their daily routines and in their activities. Hand washing and toilet facilities are readily accessible to the children and they are gaining good levels of independence in their personal care. However, the practice of sharing a bowl of water after creative activities reduces the effectiveness of these otherwise positive practices.

Children's dietary needs are known to staff and care is taken to ensure that these are met. They receive a range of healthy snacks mid-session and have independent access to water throughout the session as well as a choice of drinks at snack and lunch times. Food related activities help children to understand what healthy eating is about. They make bread, pizzas and fruit salads, tasting, discussing and comparing the merits of different types of foods. For example, children know that fruit and vegetables are 'good' foods but that biscuits and sweets are not so good.

Children have regular opportunities to exercise and play outside in the fresh air either in the garden or the enclosed playground where they have access to a range of equipment which promote their physical skills. They competently ride their wheeled toys, manoeuvring around obstacles and are learning how to balance on two-wheeled cycles fitted with stabilisers. They are able to climb on the climbing frame and up the slide, however, these are not challenging for the more able children. Children enjoy moving to music and joining in with action songs indoors where they are able to dance around, interpreting the music and changing their movements accordingly.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety is assured because suitable steps are taken to reduce their risk of accidental injury and to ensure that their environment is safe and secure. The premises and outside areas are securely locked and fire exits are kept clear. Children participate in regular fire drills and staff are very clear about emergency evacuation procedures. Safety equipment is used where appropriate, such as around heaters, and daily safety checks are conducted before the children arrive to ensure that the premises are safe. Children are supervised well and adult-to-child ratios are increased when they are taken on outings so that there is a ratio of one adult to two children on these occasions. This ensures that children can be closely supervised.

Children have access to a wide range of suitable equipment and play provision which are clean and maintained in good condition. Low tables and chairs provide opportunities for children to play comfortably and low storage of most of the play provision encourages them to make their own choices about what they want to do.

Children's welfare is suitably safeguarded because staff have a clear understanding about child protection procedures. They have recently updated their knowledge about safeguarding children practices and are clear about their roles and responsibilities for ensuring that children are not put at risk of harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very settled and confident within their environment. Their interest is sustained throughout the session because there is a wide choice of stimulating activities for them to choose from and they concentrate well at their activities. Children have established a warm relationship with staff, confidently approaching them for support and conversation, for example, for an impromptu story or for help with a puzzle. There is good interaction between them and children receive regular praise and encouragement for their achievements and for helping with small tasks. This helps to promote their self-esteem and sense of belonging.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff are knowledgeable about the Foundation Stage curriculum and plan a wide and balanced programme of activities for the children which promotes their development in all areas of learning. Activities are evaluated to ensure that the learning intention has been met, and, where appropriate, for staff to effect change or improvement. Staff use appropriate teaching methods to enthuse children, such as asking open ended questions to encourage them to think for themselves and to solve simple problems. For example, looking at the detail of a picture to determine where a piece of jig-saw should fit. Children are supported well in their learning because staff maintain a good balance between assisting the children and enabling them to complete tasks to their own satisfaction. However, they sometimes do not give enough warning when it is time to tidy up for the next part of the session which intrudes upon the children's play. Staff monitor children's progress through a series of observations and assessments, using these to chart their progress and to plan for the next stage in their learning. As a result, children are appropriately challenged and learning at their own pace.

Children display good levels of confidence and independence. They enjoy helping with tasks such as serving the snack and pouring drinks for their peers and competently dress themselves in readiness for playing outside. They quickly settle down to their play and learning, often self selecting activities and concentrate for sustained periods of time to complete a task such as finishing a railway layout. Children's communication skills are developing very well. They are confident speakers and have a good vocabulary, readily conversing with their peers about their experiences. For example, children discuss their birthday and how their cakes were decorated. Children enjoy listening to, and joining in, with the refrain of familiar stories such as Three Billy Goats Gruff, taking great delight in changing the tone of their voices to represent each Billy Goat. They regularly look at books on their own in the very well stocked library area and enjoy choosing books to take home to share with their families. Children are beginning to link simple sounds with letters and recognise familiar words such as their name. They have many mark making opportunities through drawing and painting activities and are developing good hand-eye coordination through activities such as threading, using scissors and transferring sand from one vessel to another. Consequently, children are able to form recognisable letters and write their own names.

Children show interest in number and are beginning to understand through their daily activities simple problem solving, counting and calculation. They make size comparisons of the toy lizards, grading them in order of the length of their tails, using mathematical language to describe this and compare which group of bears is the heaviest on the scales. Children are beginning to recognise numerals and correctly link these to a group of objects which demonstrate that they understand what the numbers represent. They construct with many different resources and materials, fitting pieces together to make a pattern or object, sourcing the correct shape or size to enable them to complete their task.

Children have many opportunities to find out about the world around them. They learn about the natural environment, keenly sharing their knowledge about how plants grow. For example, they describe how carrots grow from seeds and how the carrot grows underground and the leaves above ground. Children show interest in the seasons and the effect the weather has on their gardening activities. They demonstrate through their conversations that they understand that the seeds they have recently sown need to be kept warm indoors until they are big enough and the weather is warmer for them to be transplanted outside. Children use technology such as computers, telephones and programmable role play resources such as cash registers and pretend domestic equipment to support their learning. They explore objects with magnifying glasses noticing the difference in size as they move the glass closer and further away.

Children enjoy a range of experiences which promote their creativity. They play imaginary roles in the role play area, linking these to familiar experiences such as their home life and create picnics and imaginary walks for their soft toys. Different painting techniques such as brush painting and making hand and foot prints encourage children to experiment with paint and colour and they freely design and create pictures, collages and three-dimensional objects using glue, scissors and a range of recyclable materials. Children manipulate play dough and use various cutters and rollers to make shapes, enjoying the experience of handling malleable materials as they pull and stretch the dough.

Children freely express themselves in their musical movement sessions, interpreting the music as it speeds up and slows down and enjoy miming to familiar rhymes such as Incy Wincy spider. They are gaining an understanding of how exercise affects their bodies, for example, listening to each others heart beat and blowing through straws to see what effect the effort has on their breathing.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are well supported. They receive good attention from staff who liaise with their parents to ensure that any necessary information is shared to enable them to plan and provide care which is appropriate to the children's specific needs. The setting has effective arrangements to care for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for children who have English as an additional language although none currently attend.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. They behave very well and are familiar with their daily routine and of their boundaries, developing a good sense of right and wrong. Children are learning to respect and value others, sharing and taking turns and caring about their peers. For example, at tidy up time some children inform their peers that toys they have brought from home have been put safely on the shelf until it is time to go home, pointing to their location. Children are beginning to gain an understanding about the wider world and their local community through celebrating festivals, tasting food from a variety of

cultures and having access to a range of resources which show positive images of culture and gender.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Children benefit from the friendly relationship the whole leadership and management team has established with them. Parents receive a wide range of information which keeps them informed about the organisation and smooth running of the setting. This includes making sure that they are familiar with the policies and procedures, minutes of committee meetings and informative notice boards. Parents receive comprehensive information about the Foundation Stage curriculum that clearly explains how their children's learning is promoted and regularly receive copies of the activity plans. This ensures that they know what it is their children will be doing and gives them the opportunity to continue the activities at home. Parents are able to discuss their children's progress at any time, however, there is no clear system in place to enable them to share their children's starting points on admission nor to contribute to their progress records. Parents are invited to contribute to the overall management of the setting as a member of the committee and to help in other ways, for example, fund raising events.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The provider meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. The children's environment is clean, warm, welcoming and very well presented with examples of their own art work, colourful posters and displays. Good use is made of the available space which means that children are able to move around and play in safety and comfort. Effective use is made of time which ensures that children are constructively occupied throughout the session. Adult: child ratios are high and children are supervised well. Staff have a good relationship with each other and work very well together, sharing tasks and contributing equally to the success of each session. As a result, children receive good care and education.

Appropriate recruitment procedures ensure that staff are suitable to work directly with the children and committee members are vetted to establish their suitability to be involved in the organisation of the setting. Staff are appropriately qualified and are given opportunities to attend training events to up-date their skills on a regular basis. As a result, they are knowledgeable about current practices and of forthcoming changes, putting plans in place to ensure that children are able to benefit from these. All required documentation and parental agreements are in place which means that staff are able to act in the children's best interests and a comprehensive range of policies and procedures ensure that the setting operates safely and runs smoothly.

Leadership and management is good. There is a clear commitment to continually improve the quality of the setting and children benefit from the effective monitoring of the nursery education provision. The management committee meet regularly and receive reports from the manager about the provision to ensure that children receive a balanced curriculum and activities are evaluated to ensure that they offer children appropriate challenges. Staff receive annual appraisals to monitor the quality of their work and their ongoing development needs. There is good liaison with the adjacent school and there are regular reciprocal visits. The reception teacher shares ideas and expertise with staff and the children often share in activities such as the Harvest festival and playing in the playground with the reception children. This helps to prepare children for a smooth transition into school and for the first steps in their formal education.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care and nursery education inspections the provider agreed to: amend the wording of the request for consent for emergency medical advice and treatment in order that parents are fully aware of the 'emergency' element of the request; ensure that staff have support to access relevant training to augment their knowledge of child protection, equal opportunities and the Special Needs Code of Practice; that the deputy receives support in becoming appropriately qualified. The provider has addressed these issues by: amending the wording of parental consents to clearly state what it is they have consented to. Staff attend at least four training days each year and have updated their knowledge of child protection, equal opportunities and special needs. The deputy has completed a recognised early years qualification. As a result, children benefit because staff are familiar with current working practices.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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.

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 good.

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):

- review children's hand hygiene routines to ensure that they are effective throughout the whole of the session

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):

- further develop opportunities for parents to contribute to their children's starting points and to their progress records (also applies to care)

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk