

Best Friends Childcare

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

Inspection date	15/12/2014
Previous inspection date	19/12/2013

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

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Staff provide opportunities for children to develop the smaller muscles in their hands and from an early age, children demonstrate good control and dexterity. This helps to develop their early writing skills.
- Staff foster children's independence well and they learn to do things for themselves with confidence. Children are emotionally well prepared for future learning in school.
- Staff's knowledge of safeguarding is secure. They understand their responsibilities and are fully aware of to whom they must report their concerns. Children's safety and welfare are well protected.
- Partnerships with parents are strong. Staff work very closely with them to consistently promote children's individual needs.

It is not yet outstanding because

- On occasions, staff do not consistently promote children's language and critical thinking to the very optimum.
- Staff do not always encourage children to say please and thank you when they are given something or consistently model the use of good manners to younger children.

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 had a tour of the nursery and the rooms used for the breakfast and after-school club.
- The inspector observed children taking part in a range of activities and spoke with the staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager and held a meeting with her.
- The inspector checked evidence of the suitability, qualifications and training of staff in the nursery, breakfast and after-school club.
- The inspector read the nursery's self-evaluation form, and looked at a range of policies and procedures, children's assessment records and planning documents.
- The inspector spoke to parents and has taken account of their views.

Inspector

Katherine Hurst

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 situated in purpose-built premises on the Samuel Ryder Academies school site in St Albans, and is managed by a private individual. The nursery and the before- and after-school club serves the local area and is accessible to all children. The nursery operates from two rooms and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The before- and after-school club operate from two rooms in a portable cabin next to the nursery. Best Friends Childcare employs 10 members of childcare staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3, including one with Early Years Professional Status. The nursery opens Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6.30pm and children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 29 children attending who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and 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:

- optimise children's learning by consistently maximising all opportunities to extend their language and critical thinking, such as, by asking supportive questions or providing additional resources, to support their rapid progress towards the early learning goals

- enhance children's understanding of the good behaviour that is expected of them by consistently reminding them of the expectations and modelling how to use good manners.

Inspection judgements

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

Children arrive happily at nursery and are keen to start playing in the fun and relaxed environment that staff provide. Since the last inspection, staff have increased their knowledge of how children learn, and as a result, the quality of teaching is good. Staff have a thorough knowledge of children's learning and development and they plan challenging experiences that promote their next steps. They evaluate children's progress against approved child development guidance documents and this is regularly shared with the parents. Staff encourage parents to share their observations from home and integrate these into children's assessments. This includes identifying children's starting points and completing the progress check for children aged between two and three years. Staff

encourage parents to support children's learning at home and give them ideas for activities, such as, repeating counting rhymes, and sorting objects depending on their size. Therefore, staff and parents work effectively in partnership to support children's individual needs and all children make good progress towards the early learning goals, given their starting points. Children in the early years age group, who attend the before- and after-school club, enjoy a range of toys and activities. Staff communicate with the reception class teachers and use information from their homework books to plan experiences that relate to the children's current interests and topic themes from class. Therefore, staff promote a consistent approach to teaching and learning for these children.

Staff promote older children's understanding of the world and how things work. Older children enjoy playing with a string telephone that they have made. Staff explain that they must make sure that the string is fully stretched out and they encourage them to talk into the cups. Children have conversations with their friends and they listen intently by placing the cup to their ear. This helps to develop their inquisitiveness, and their knowledge of science, in preparation for later learning. Staff provide opportunities for all children to develop the smaller muscles in their hands. For example, they enjoy challenging threading activities using cotton reels and thick pipe cleaners, and they manipulate play dough, as well as using tools to cut it up. Children demonstrate good dexterity and control using pencils and mark making tools from an early age. Therefore, staff help to promote their early writing skills and prepare them for future learning in school.

Staff support children, including those who speak English as an additional language and have special educational needs and/or disabilities, to communicate their thoughts and preferences. They regularly use sign language when they are talking to children, and they encourage them to repeat both the words and signs. For example, after reading several younger children a story, staff support them to recall the characters in book and together they say and sign the names, such as 'yellow duck'. This helps to develop children's communication and language. However, on occasions, staff do not enhance children's language and thinking to the very optimum by engaging them in purposeful conversations, asking supportive questions or providing additional resources to stimulate discussions. Consequently, staff do not consistently maximise opportunities to support children to make rapid progress in their learning and development.

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

Children are very happy within the nursery, because staff are caring and provide a fun atmosphere for them to play and learn in. Staff consistently sit at children's level to enable them to have eye contact. Children have strong attachments with staff and they feel secure in their care. Staff support children to have high self-esteem and confidence. They praise them for their achievements and listen to what they have to say. Parents provide staff with a wealth of information about their children and their interests and care needs. Therefore, staff know the children very well and they promote their emotional well-being from when they start at the nursery. Staff support children to adapt to changes in their lives with confidence, such as when they move house. They ask parents to provide photographs of the children's bedrooms and then engage children in discussions during circle time to develop their excitement and reduce their anxieties. Consequently, staff

prepare children emotionally for future learning and experiences.

Staff foster children's independence well. Since the last inspection, they have developed the use of visual aids and children are able to make choices about what toys they play with and the activities they engage in. For example, all toy boxes have a photograph of what is inside and staff use a visual timetable that children use to communicate their play preferences. Children's behaviour is generally good. They play cooperatively with each other and staff support them to share the toys with each other. However, staff do not always encourage children to say 'please' and 'thank you' or role model this to younger children by saying it for them. Therefore, children do not consistently supported in displaying the good behaviour that adults expect of them.

Staff teach children the importance of playing safely. For example, when two children are using a string telephone, staff explain that they must not walk around the room while the string is stretched out, as another child might walk into it and hurt themselves. Children take risks in their play as they climb and balance on the large equipment in the garden, such as the rubber tyres. They play outside in the fresh air on a daily basis and develop good physical skills. The nursery chef prepares healthy and nutritious meals and snacks for the children. At lunch time all children, except younger babies, serve themselves their meal and staff talk to them about how much they are putting on their plates. This helps to develop children's understanding of portion control and how much food they need. Older children are able to manage their hygiene needs by themselves and they demonstrate an understanding of when they need to wash their hands. For example, after using marker pens to draw with, children wash their hands independently without any prompting from staff. As a result, staff support children to develop an understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles and how to manage this themselves.

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

After the last inspection, Ofsted issued two actions to improve practice. Following this, the manager and staff have developed their knowledge and practice to ensure that the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are fully met. This demonstrates their commitment to improve. As a team, the manager and staff evaluate the quality of their teaching and care and they ask parents to give feedback of what improvements they would like to see. Staff assessments of children's learning and development are detailed. They plan challenging experiences to promote children's next steps to ensure that they make good progress towards the early learning goals. The manager closely and effectively monitors the quality of staff teaching and the educational programmes. She has high expectations of all staff and encourages them to attend training courses to extend their knowledge. Staff use the information that they gain from training to enhance the quality of teaching and care for children. For example, staff who have recently refreshed their safeguarding knowledge are more aware of certain behaviours that would cause them concern. Therefore, training has a positive impact on the care that children receive.

The manager has improved the induction programme and staff have a strong understanding of the nursery's safeguarding policies and procedures. They know their

responsibilities in keeping children safe from harm and to whom they must report their concerns. They also understand the whistleblowing procedures if they are unable to speak with the designated safeguarding officer within the nursery. The manager has robust procedures in place to ensure that children are kept safe from the inappropriate use of technology. For example, staff and visitors are not permitted to use their mobile phones within the nursery and all parents are asked to finish their telephone conversations outside before being permitted to collect their child. All staff hold a current first-aid qualification, which ensures that they can respond quickly, with appropriate knowledge, when children have an accident. Consequently, staff consistently protect children's safety and welfare.

Staff understand the importance of working in collaboration with other providers and professionals to ensure that there is a consistent approach to children's teaching and care. They communicate with those that offer specialist advice and support to meet children's individual needs. Staff from the breakfast and after-school club speak to the Early Years Foundation Stage teacher within the school on a regular basis to discuss children's interests and care needs. This enables them to provide activities that relate to the current topics that the children are learning about in the reception class. Partnerships with parents are strong. They work closely together and staff are supportive to the whole family, as well as the child. Parents say that staff are friendly and that their children come home talking about their day at nursery. They are very happy with the care that staff provide and they are keen to recommend the nursery to other parents.

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. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of 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		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. 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	962543
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	19/12/2013
Telephone number	01727 847475

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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, 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.

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