

Brown Bears Community Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY280956
Inspection date	20 June 2007
Inspector	Anne Mitchell
Setting Address	St Martins Primary School, Shady Bower, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP1 2RG
Telephone number	01722 554300
E-mail	
Registered person	Brown Bears Community Nursery
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Sessional 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Brown Bears Community Nursery opened in 1976. It operates from a room within a primary school in Salisbury. A maximum of 20 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday during term time from 09:00 to 15:15. The nursery has access to a secure and enclosed outdoor play area as well as the school playground.

There are currently 42 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these 28 receive funding for nursery education. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children for whom English is an additional language. The nursery serves the local area.

The nursery employs seven staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications and one member of staff is working towards a qualification. The setting is supported by the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is supported through their knowledge of hand washing routines. They are independent in their personal care. They use the toilet independently and wash their hands afterwards. Low level sink and toilets, and paper towels are well within their reach, as well as the child's 'foam' soap dispenser help children's independence. Their understanding of hygiene routines are further promoted through the displayed illustrated 'time lines' of using the toilet and washing their hands. However, staff do not always supervise sufficiently and children often forget to flush the toilets.

Children benefit from the cleaning routines in place. Equipment is washed thoroughly during each school holiday. Children's health and wellbeing is supported through the accident and medication recording, policies and procedures. Children can be treated effectively in the event of a minor accident as five members of staff hold current first aid certificates.

Children's dietary needs are recorded from the outset and any allergies or specific requirements highlighted to alert staff. Children have access to drinking water throughout the session as a jug and cups are within reach to enable them to help themselves. Consequently children are well hydrated throughout the day. Children enjoy healthy snacks and drinks, comprising of fresh fruit such as banana and strawberries, savoury crackers or wholemeal pitta bread. Children who stay to lunch bring their own lunch boxes from home.

Children have good opportunities for physical play and fresh air as they have daily access to the small outdoor area, and are able to use climbing and balancing equipment on the school's 'play trail'.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's safety is promoted within the generally secure school environment. Visitors to the group are recorded and access to the setting is monitored by staff. Most safety equipment is in place but systems to check the environment are not always fully effective. Children's knowledge of keeping themselves safe is reinforced through discussions with staff who explain why it is important to use scissors carefully and to sit properly on the chair.

Equipment and resources are checked regularly by staff and are safe. Children can access toys and resources safely at specified times as they are stored in low level drawers and cupboards. However some heavier equipment is difficult for children to carry with ease. There is a high staff ratio but at times the level of supervision is not effective. Children enjoy local outings to the library, for example, as there are secure procedures in place to ensure they are safe. Children's safety is compromised when the vacuum cleaner is used after lunch, while they are close by.

Staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and procedures and some staff have attended training. They recognise possible signs and symptoms and have effective procedures to follow. Therefore children are well protected from harm and neglect.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children come into the setting happily and most settle well, leaving their parent or carer with confidence. They enjoy the daily routine as they participate in a music and movement activity called 'Wake and Shake' at the start of the session. Children then settle to an adult planned and led activity. Consequently their independence and choice is sometimes limited. Children enjoy free play at set times and make good use of the small but well resourced outdoor area, where they have planted flowers, beans and tomatoes. They explore sand and water play and are well occupied on the mat with small world play. Staff take an interest in what children have to say and engage them in conversation with enthusiasm.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and plans cover all areas. The current focus is on preparing children for school, although there has been limited liaison with the reception class. Many activities are adult led and very formal using a worksheet format. Most staff hold relevant qualifications and have attended training on the Foundation Stage curriculum. They clearly understand the learning outcome for each planned activity, but there is little differentiation for children of varying abilities. Teaching methods used vary. Many staff use open ended questioning to help children think for themselves. For example, a member of staff asks 'How can we make a hole?' The child replies 'We could use a pencil'. The member of staff praises child for having such a good idea.

Children's observations are completed regularly to identify their next steps for development. There is a key worker system in place. Each key worker spends a session each day with their children and a planned activity. There is a very high staff ratio and this provides good support for children as they learn. No resources are set out at the start of the day, so this limits children's choices. However, there are opportunities to enjoy free play at set times. Children become more enthusiastic and enjoy creating collage and models from their imagination. Evaluation and assessment of activities is inconsistent. Staff have comprehensive evaluation forms to complete, but only do so for some activities.

Children with specific requirements are carefully monitored and developmental concerns are discussed with parents and carers at the soonest opportunity. The SENCO is experienced and knowledgeable, and liaises effectively with other professionals to support children with behavioural problems and speech and language delay.

The majority of children are confident and enthusiastic as they come into the setting. They smile at staff and tell them about what they have been doing. One child approaches an adult with confidence to show her a picture she has drawn. Children are very independent in their personal care, using the toilet and washing facilities alone. They have developed good relationships with staff and with their peers. One boy seeks out his friend when he arrives and they sit and talk together, telling each other their news. Another boy comforts a girl who is crying at register time.

Children enjoy listening to familiar stories and participate well. They recognise their name cards as they self register at the start of the day and at snack time. Children learn that words carry meaning as resources are labelled throughout the setting. Opportunities to make marks and write independently are inconsistent. Some staff encourage children to write their own names

while others do it for them. Children listen well at circle time. They are confident speakers and communicate well. A member of staff tells the children to be careful with a library book and a child adds 'You must turn the pages carefully or you might rip it!'

Children learn about numbers through formal 'worksheet' activities. They can count, with confidence, to 10 and some above. Through counting the number of cars or windows they can match the numeral, but opportunities for children to explore number in a relevant and meaningful way are limited. Children are beginning to use mathematical language in play activities and compare the size of play dough, for example. They recognise simple shapes and can find similar shapes around the room. One child asks an adult to cut a circle in her box. She then proudly shows the adult circles around the room in the form of wheels and construction equipment.

Children enjoy exploring the natural world through planting and growing beans, tomatoes, cress and flowers. They show the adults how the beans send out shoots to hold onto the cane to help it grow tall. Children use their imaginations to design and build houses and barns for the miniature farm animals. They use a range of materials such as tape and glue to stick the card. Opportunities to explore information and communication technology are limited, as the computer is only used once a week. Children are beginning to develop a sense of time and place through looking at the nursery calendar and discussion with staff. They talk about what they will do at the weekend and special events, such as birthday parties.

Children explore colour and texture through using sparkly dough, collage and drawing. Children are free to choose from a choice of materials to create models and collage from their imagination. Children playing at the farm decide they want to make a barn for the animals so go to the craft area to find boxes, scissors and wool. Staff enable them to make a variety of animal shelters, and children use cotton wool to make 'a comfy bed' for the animals. As they explore the craft equipment, two children find beads and string and make bracelets and necklaces. Children enjoy music and singing as they join in with the taped music and move around the room.

Children have sufficient opportunities to develop their small muscle control through using tools such as scissors and pastry cutters. Their hand/eye co-ordination is promoted as they thread beads onto wool. Children enjoy climbing and balancing on the school's 'play-trail' equipment, but there are few challenges for older and more able children. Children enjoy pedalling bikes and scooting, using the outdoor play equipment with enthusiasm. Children learn about healthy lifestyles through discussion at snack time and projects about healthy eating.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are welcomed into the setting by staff. Children's pictures are displayed alongside bright posters, but the choice of activities is limited at the start of the day. Children say 'hello' to Brown Bear and sing a welcome song. This, along with the opportunity to wear the Brown Bear polo shirt or sweatshirt gives children a sense of belonging.

A clear equal opportunities policy is in place and shared with parents through the setting's prospectus. Children learn about the wider world through the range of resources that positively reflect diversity and exploring different festivals as part of a planned activity. Staff know children well and meet their individual needs. Children for whom English is an additional language are welcomed and staff liaise with parents to help them settle.

Children's behaviour is good. Staff have a positive and consistent approach to managing behaviour and children respond well. They receive stickers or coloured stamps for helping to tidy or being kind. Staff are effective role models and speak to children kindly. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents in respect of the nursery education is satisfactory. Children who are leaving to go to school receive a written progress report. Staff remind parents that they can see their children's developmental records at any time, and an open day is planned to give parents time to speak to their child's key worker. Newsletters inform parents about forthcoming projects. Parents are given limited information about the Foundation Stage curriculum and stepping stones.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides care. There are suitable systems in place to check new staff. All staff hold, or are working towards a relevant child care qualification, and demonstrate a commitment to continued training. This helps them promote positive outcomes for children. Staff meet regularly to discuss children's progress, plans and observations.

Children are well supported in their learning as there are high staff ratios. However, at times the level of supervision is not effective. Space inside and out is organised sufficiently to meet the children's needs and allow sufficient space to play, and the setting uses the outdoor space imaginatively. Children are able to visit the toilets independently, but staff do not always remind them to flush the toilets after them.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. A number of systems are used to monitor the nursery education, such as attendance at cluster meetings, liaison with other local settings and staff meetings. The setting has in the past had regular support from an advisory teacher, who has now retired. Staff appraisals are completed annually to highlight any training needs.

Policies and procedures reflecting the settings practice are in place and available to parents. They are currently being updated by the committee. All required documentation is stored securely to maintain confidentiality and shared with parents and carers as required.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the registered person agreed to develop the staff and committee's understanding of child protection issues and to ensure that records are stored securely to ensure confidentiality. Four members of staff have attended child protection training and all staff have been provided with child protection packs to extend their knowledge and understanding. Information has been provided for parents and the committee and this ensures that children are protected from harm and neglect.

At the last education inspection the registered person agreed to increase the frequency of practical activities to encourage an interest in number problems and basic calculation. They agreed to develop the assessment of strengths and weaknesses of the nursery education provision to ensure that weaknesses are fully addressed and to ensure that records of the children's progress are shared with the parents. The planning has been extended and is still in development to help children experience practical number problems and early calculation.

Strategies to develop the assessment of the nursery education are ongoing, and parents are welcome to view their children's records at any time. An open day is planned to give parents time to look at records and speak to their child's key worker.

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.

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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):

- continue to promote children's understanding of daily hygiene practices
- ensure supervision is consistent to promote children's health, safety and enjoyment

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):

- ensure activities are evaluated effectively to inform future planning and provide appropriate challenge and support for children of varying abilities
- extend opportunities for children to be independent in all areas of their learning

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