

Annual Inspection Report 2022-2023

Little Bears Nursery

Child Day Care Centre

16 January 2023



DHSC

We carried out this announced inspection on 16 January 2023. The inspection was led by an inspector from the Registration and Inspection team.

Service and service type

Little Bears Nursery is a child day care centre. This means they provide day care for one or more children under the age of eight for more than two hours in the same day and is not a private dwelling.

People's experience of using this service and what we found

To get to the heart of people's experiences of care and treatment, we always ask the following five questions:

- Is it safe?
- Is it effective?
- Is it caring?
- Is it responsive to people's needs?
- Is it well-led?

These questions form the framework for the areas we look at during the inspection.

Our key findings

No areas of improvement were identified as a result of this inspection.

The interactions between the staff team and the children were comfortable and natural and this helped create a warm and homely atmosphere

The children were receiving a caring service that promoted their independence, confidence and learning.

Staff were positive about working at the setting and worked well together. They had established good relationships with the children and their families and parents said they found the team to be approachable and caring.

The following feedback was received from the families of children attending the nursery.

- 'The nursery is an amazing setting for my [child]. From the very first taster session [child] had, they made me feel at ease and reassured about leaving [child] there with them.'
- 'They are all so lovely and caring and nothing is too much to ask.'
- 'I know the nursery is great by how much my little [child] wants to stay there when I collect [child] at the end of the day.'
- 'They are happy to answer any questions I ask about my [child] and offer any advice if I need it.'
- 'The day to day running of the nursery appears well run and organised.'
- 'Children (and parents) are always greeted with a friendly welcome, and leave with a cheerful goodbye.'
- 'The children all seem very happy whilst in their care'

- 'I feel very comfortable approaching any of the staff. They are more than happy to thoroughly talk through anything to put my mind at rest.'
- 'We love that the children go out regularly on trips all over the island.'
- 'As parents, we have a lovely relationship with the staff, and get a lovely feeling and vibe when we walk in, and then leave the children there. It feels very warm and friendly and welcoming.'
- 'LOVE activities they do, inside and outside. This includes playing outside but most amazingly, the amount of varied outings they have are incredible!!'
- 'We are really pleased with the nursery and I genuinely believe we wouldn't find better on offer for our family, in the north.'
- 'They have been able to manage all my expectations from the get go and the manager, Laura, has always been able to answer any questions above and beyond what I expect back. She makes it a very professional yet relaxed environment where nothing is too much. You can most certainly tell she loves her job.'
- 'We are pleased that in pre-school children have the opportunity to go swimming' and another told us

At this inspection we found improvements had been made in response to the previous inspection.

About the service

Little Bears Nursery is located on the outskirts of Ramsey. They are registered to care for 40 children aged 0-11 years. As well as operating the nursery, the setting also provides after school care for children attending local schools. At the time of inspection they had 53 children registered at the setting.

The setting has two playrooms, a kitchen/dining area, an office, children's toilets, separate staff facilities and a secure, well-equipped outdoor play area. Parents provide a packed lunch for their child as well as personal care items.

Registered manager status

The service has a registered manager. This means that they and the provider are legally responsible for how the service is run and for the quality and safety of the care provided.

Notice of Inspection

This announced inspection was part of our annual inspection programme which took place between April 2022 and March 2023.

Inspection activity started on 3 January 2023 and we visited the service on 16 January 2023.

What we did before the inspection

We reviewed information we received about the service since the last inspection. We used the information the provider sent us in the provider information return (PIR) and supporting documentation, notifications, complaints/compliments and any safeguarding issues.

Feedback was sourced via email from seven families who use the service. Three responses were received.

During the inspection

An inspection of all rooms and areas was undertaken and a range of records were reviewed. This included 14 children's individual care records, completed medication forms, accident forms, and a variety of documents relating to the management of the service. The files for six new members of staff were examined in relation to recruitment and induction.

Time was spent looking at the on-line application used by the setting and the inspector was shown children's observation records that linked into developmental/learning areas.

We spoke with three members of staff and the registered manager. Observations were carried out using an observational framework for inspection. This is a way to help us understand the experience of staff and children.

SECTION C Inspection Findings

C1 Is the service safe?

Our findings:

Safe – this means we looked for evidence that children were protected from abuse and avoidable harm. The service does not require any improvements in this area.

This service was found to be safe.

Systems, processes and practices to safeguard children from abuse.

A number of systems were in place to safeguard the children attending. All staff have attended level 2 safeguarding children training and refresh their training every three years. The registered manager spoke of the difficulties they had experienced in booking their staff onto the Isle of Man training. She explained that to ensure staff training remains current and new staff are made aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse, they have completed 'Safer Schools' safeguarding training that was approved by the Department of Education, Sport and Culture's Safeguarding Lead.

Staff take turns carrying out intimate care tasks and either the registered manager or deputy supports them in order to minimise the vulnerability of the staff and children. There was a written record being maintained to show which member of staff had carried out the task on any given day. The staff team are not permitted to have access to their mobile phones whilst they are working with the children and the lay-out of the rooms and staffing levels ensured there was no lone working.

There was a system in place for recording and reporting any concerns raised or disclosures made. The system was supported by a detailed, up to date policy and a number of supporting policies.

Staffing ratios and recruitment

There were six members of staff who had commenced their employment at the setting since the last inspection. Examination of their files showed the provider had carried out all pre-employment checks prior to their respective start dates in order to ensure each was suitable to work with children. Evidence was submitted to show all staff had a current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check in place and online checks had been carried out on those who had signed up to the update service.

New members of the team receive an eight week induction to their role. Staff spoken to said they felt the programme was well-paced and informative. Throughout the induction period, the registered manager had regular one to one meetings with each new staff member. Staff spoken to said they found the meetings to be supportive and enabled them to discuss their progress.

Staffing levels were observed to be safe. Over half the staff team held a childcare qualification at level 2 or 3 respectively and one member of staff was in the process of gaining their level 3 qualification.

Assessing risk, safety monitoring and management

The building and outside play areas were found to be secure. Arrangements were in place to ensure no unauthorised persons could access the premises without the staff team being aware. Visitors can only enter when let in by a member of staff. Once in, visitors' are asked to sign the visitors' book and are supervised at all times.

A variety of risk assessments were in place that covered activities both indoors and outdoors. Evidence showed they were being reviewed twice a year as well as when changes occurred. Resources and equipment are checked on a daily basis and any broken/damaged items are removed so they do not pose a risk to the children.

Routine tests and maintenance checks on the environment and equipment were up to date and were being carried out within the expected timescales. Certificates and records were in place to evidence this.

Using medicines safely

Systems were in place for the safe administration of medication. There was an up to date policy in place and there were suitable arrangements in place to ensure medicines were stored safely out of the reach of children. Prescribed medication is not accepted unless it is in the original packaging, complete with the prescription label that enables staff to verify the medication to be given has been prescribed for the named child. Only senior staff administer medication and this is witnessed by a second staff member. Medication will not be given to a child unless the relevant documentation has been completed by the parent.

In order to meet the children's individual medical needs, members of the staff team have attended appropriate training to ensure they are able to administer specific medicines safely.

Preventing and controlling infection

There were a number of arrangements in place to help prevent the risk of infection. Personal protective equipment (PPE) was available and being used by the staff team and parents are asked not to send their children to the nursery if they have an infectious illness. There was an up to date policy in place to support this.

The staff team were responsible for cleaning the setting and all rooms, communal areas, resources and equipment were found to be clean and in good condition. There was a colour-coded cleaning system in place and equipment was seen to support this.

Children were observed being encouraged to wash their hands throughout the inspection. Age appropriate explanations were given to the children in order to develop their awareness and understanding of why the task was important.

Inspection Findings

C2 Is the service effective?

Our findings

Effective – this means we looked for evidence that children’s care, learning and development are supported and achieving good outcomes. The service does not require any improvements in this area.

This service was found to be effective.

Staff skills, knowledge and experience to deliver effect care and support

The children were being cared for by a staff team that had the relevant qualifications, knowledge and experience to support and care for them as well as promote their development and learning.

All mandatory training was up to date and additional training had been undertaken in order to ensure the children’s individual needs were being met.

Supporting and developing children’s care and development needs

The nursery follows the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum and each child has their own keyworker. Baseline assessments are carried out on the children when they start at the setting to ensure the staff are aware of each individual’s stage of development.

Regular observations are carried out and developmental trackers were being used in order to assess the children’s developmental progress. Should staff identify that a child wasn’t meeting developmental milestones within the expected age range, we were informed additional activities would be implemented in order to support the child.

The setting promotes learning through play and there was a wide variety of activities set out for the children to participate in. All were planned and there was a balance of adult-led and child-led activities as well as spontaneous play. Children were also being encouraged to make their own choices as to what they wanted to play with and to enable this resources had been made easily accessible to the children. Parents told us they were pleased with the variety of activities and experiences being offered to the children ‘The set-up of the nursery differs all the time, depending on the topic and activities on offer. It is obvious that thought and planning has gone into the activities each day and there is a range of things on offer to keep all ages and interests engaged. The variety of opportunities is fantastic.’

The registered manager explained a review of how the planning is undertaken had recently been undertaken and changes made. All staff are now actively involved with planning and the more experienced staff are supporting the newer team members. Planning sheets for each age range were displayed in the relevant areas and showed all areas of development were being promoted. Planning for the after school club reflected the style of care being provided.

Supporting a balanced diet

Parents provide their own child’s lunch and these were being safely stored. Lunchtime was observed to be relaxed. Staff wore gloves and aprons during lunch and a discussion was had as to why gloves were needed. One child confidently explained ‘they stop the germs’ and another said, in-between giggles, ‘they stop monsters eating your fingers’.

The children were not rushed to eat their food and staff spent time talking to them while they were eating. It was a social occasion that ensured children were able to enjoy mealtime. Some children ate slower than the others and, when the children who had finished their lunch left the tables to play, staff continued having conversations with the remaining children until they had finished eating.

Relevant information had been shared with the staff to ensure they were aware of the children's dietary requirements and preferences.

The setting provides snacks for the children and there was a snack menu displayed showing what snacks are offered. The children are given foods such as toast, fruit, crackers and cheese, brioche, pizza, cereal, veg sticks and houmous, ham wraps, crumpets and rice cakes. One parent told us they 'love the variety of snacks they eat, a great healthy balanced diet'

Working with other agencies to deliver effective care and support

The registered manager liaises with outside agencies when there is a need. We were informed the parents would be fully informed and included at every stage.

Inspection Findings

C3 Is the service caring?

Our findings

Caring – this means we looked for evidence that the service involved and treated children with compassion, kindness, dignity and respect. The service does not require any improvements in this area.

This service was found to be caring.

Ensuring children are being treated with kindness, respect and compassion

The staff team were caring and respectful to the children and treated them with kindness and compassion. The children were comfortable with the staff and there was lots of laughing and banter between them. When action songs were being sung, we observed staff and children enthusiastically participating together. Everyone appeared to be enjoying themselves as they sang and did all the actions. The reaction of the children confirmed to us this was their usual practice.

Gentle tones were used in conjunction with non-verbal gestures. Staff were seen placing their hand behind the children in case they fell back or covering the edge on a piece of furniture with their hand so a child didn't bang their head when they bent over to pick up a toy.

Parents said they found the staff team to be kind and caring and the registered manager explained 'we treat the children how we would like to be treated ourselves and also how we would expect our own children to be treated.'

Maintaining children's dignity, privacy and promoting independence

Arrangements in place throughout the nursery supported staff in maintaining the children's privacy and dignity. Intimate care routines for the older children were carried out in the setting's bathroom, where modesty doors were in place to ensure the privacy and dignity for those who were able to toilet themselves was maintained. Changing facilities for the 'Little Bears' were available in their designated room. The arrangements in place ensured their privacy and dignity was also being maintained.

The staged area in the large playroom is used to accommodate children wishing to have a sleep whilst they are at nursery. The area had been made safe and was well equipped with sleep mats and bedding. To ensure children are not disturbed or lacking privacy, the staff drape a large curtain over the wooden partitions that run the length of the stage.

Children were encouraged to make choices about their play and staff were observed encouraging their independence. Before going outside to play, they encouraged the children to put their coats, hats and wellie boots on. Some children needed a helping hand but staff did not jump in and take over. They were observed letting the children try before asking them if they would like some help. One child was trying very hard to zip up their coat and declined the offer of help. Staff respected their decision and stepped back whilst continuing to encourage the child's efforts. A little while later, the child successfully zipped up their coat and the staff team praised their achievement.

Confidential information was being held securely and safe systems were in place to ensure the nursery's computer and on-line application were protected. All staff were aware of the need to maintain confidentiality and signed agreements were in place.

Inspection Findings

C4 Is the service responsive?

Our findings:

Responsive – this means we looked for evidence that the service met children’s needs. The service does not require any improvements in this area.

This service was found to be responsive.

Delivering personalised care

Parents are asked to provide information in regards to any cultural needs, dietary preferences or requirements and/or any medical conditions their child may have. The information had been shared with the staff team to ensure the individual needs of the children were being met. Parents stated regular reviews were being carried out to ensure all information about their child was up to date.

Parents are also asked to complete an ‘All About Me’ booklet which staff use to gain background information about the children so they are able to talk with them about familiar things from their first day. Conversations heard throughout the inspection showed the staff team knew the children well. Subjects such as likes, family members and favourite things were being discussed. One parent told us ‘I feel as if they take care and treat [child] like a little [child], not just a number.’

The registered manager had devised a ‘Children’s Interest’ chart that was displayed in the playroom. The names of the children were listed on the chart and staff had added things each individual child was interested in. The team meet weekly to discuss the information in order to ensure their interests are included in the planning as well as in the activities on offer. The interests recorded at the time of our inspection included hiding, dressing up, garage, making cakes, building blocks, chalk, Spiderman and wooden people.

Staff in the Baby Bears room learn about the younger children’s interests through play. They also carry out regular observations and spend time talking with the parents. This enables them to provide activities and resources the children will enjoy playing with.

There was a variety resources throughout the setting that reflected equality, diversity and inclusion. This ensured all people attending the nursery felt valued and also promoted the children’s awareness and respect for the world around them.

Responding to concerns and complaints and using to improve the quality of care

The setting had a detailed, up to date policy in place. A copy was displayed by the entrance for parents and visitors to see. There have been no complaints since the last inspection and parents told us they found the registered manager and staff team to be approachable and would be comfortable raising any concerns with them.

The registered manager explained should any concerns or complaints be received, she would discuss with the team and use as an opportunity to learn and improve the service they are providing.

Supporting children when dealing with significant events

Parents are asked to inform the nursery when a significant change occurs so the team are aware and are able to support the child. There were a variety of resources available for staff to use with the children in order to help them understand what is happening. The registered manager told us staff would be vigilant and additional observations would be carried out to ensure the child was being appropriately supported.

C5 Is the service well-led?

Our findings

Well-led – this means we looked for evidence that service leadership, management and governance assured high-quality, person-centred care; supported learning and innovation; and promoted an open, fair culture. The service does not require any improvements in this area.

This service was found to be well-led.

Clear vision and strategy in place to deliver high-quality care and promote a positive culture that is person-centred, open, inclusive and empowering which achieves good outcomes for children.

The registered manager outlined the nursery's plans for the future. One plan is to support the unqualified members of staff to gain a qualification in childcare.

Termly team meetings are held and a record of the meetings was seen. The meetings are used to discuss children's progress, new ideas, working practice, planning and other items of interest. The staff team had a good relationship with each other and worked well together. They had a friendly banter with the children and each other and that helped create a warm, homely atmosphere.

Governance framework in place that ensures responsibilities are clear and that quality performance, risks and regulatory requirements are understood and managed.

The registered manager was clear about her role and regulatory responsibilities and felt supported by the owner of the setting.

Regular one to one supervisions were being carried out with the staff team and staff spoken to said they found the meetings supportive. The registered manager works alongside the team and this has enabled her to continuously review the quality of care being provided. The outcome of the reviews are discussed with staff during their supervisions.

Engaging and including families using the service, the public and the staff team.

Staff spoken to, said they felt part of a 'great team' that 'worked well together' and they all enjoyed working at the nursery. They felt supported and valued and were encouraged to share their ideas in order to continuously develop the service and review practice.

Parents said they were happy with the service being provided and found the staff to be 'approachable' and 'friendly' and the nursery to be 'well run and organised'.

Continuous learning, improvement, innovation and ensuring sustainability.

The registered manager carries out regular audits of the premises, working practice, resources and equipment. Information from accidents and incidents was being assessed to identify any common trends and where necessary, changes made in order to improve the provision.

There have been some changes to the setting since their last inspection. They have amended their registration in order to care for more children and developed their after school provision.

The registered manager has implemented more structure to the frequency team meetings are held in order to enable more reflective practice. We were told this was going well and 'has also benefitted the team, helping them form stronger relationships'.

Working in partnership with parents.

As well as the use of the on-line application used by the setting, parents are given verbal feedback about what the children have done that day. Feedback received from parents said they were kept well informed about their child's day and they found the team to be approachable and friendly. One parent said 'the baby days app is updated regularly throughout the day so I can see what they have eaten, when they have been changed, when they have slept. The app also gives information about the progress made in the eyfs areas of learning and includes photos. There is usually always a quick conversation at pick up too, if necessary.' Another parent told us 'they are able to tell me exactly what my [child] has been up to (rather than a generic toddler update)'.