

Mama Bear's Day Nursery

Unique reference number (URN): EY471235

Address: St Johns Church, Apsley Road, Bristol, BS8 2ST

Type: Childcare on non-domestic premises

Registered with Ofsted: 31/10/2013

Registers: EYR, CCR

Registered person: Mama Bear's Day Nursery Ltd

Inspection report: 10 September 2026

Exceptional

Strong standard

Expected standard



Needs attention

Urgent improvement

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, children are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect settings for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The setting has an open and positive culture of safeguarding.
- Not met: The setting has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Overall, children achieve well from their individual starting points and demonstrate growing confidence and independence as learners. From an early age, they manage their own personal care needs effectively, including older children dressing themselves and babies beginning to feed themselves competently. Children communicate their thoughts and ideas with increasing assurance. For example, children politely request the food they prefer at lunchtime, showing secure communication skills.

Children display a highly positive mathematical understanding and are well prepared for the next stage in their development. Older children relish opportunities to take responsibility, such as helping to tidy away resources, carrying out these tasks with enthusiasm and maturity. Children show kindness, respect and growing independence. This secure foundation helps to ensure they are ready to flourish at school.

Behaviour, attitudes and establishing routines

Expected standard

Leaders emphasise the importance of punctuality and regular attendance, helping families understand how consistency strengthens children's emotional security and readiness to learn. Across the setting, children typically behave well, show kindness toward peers and demonstrate growing independence. These positive attitudes, willingness to participate and ability to sustain attention contribute to a purposeful learning environment where children feel confident to explore, communicate and engage.

Staff build warm, trusting relationships with children, offering genuine care, kindness and attentive listening that helps them feel safe, valued and emotionally secure. Minor incidents are managed calmly and consistently. For instance, staff get down to a child's level and talk to them about what happened. Staff model appropriate responses and support children to recognise consequences, resolve conflict and practise turn taking. As a result, children are developing the social skills needed to cooperate, share and play harmoniously.

Children's welfare and wellbeing

Expected standard

Throughout the setting, children's care needs are generally well met. This helps children to develop a secure sense of belonging. Staff gather detailed information from parents and carers during settling-in sessions, so they understand each child's routines, preferences and comfort needs. This enables children to settle quickly and feel secure from the outset. Babies form close attachments with their key person and confidently seek them out for reassurance, particularly when unfamiliar adults enter the room. These positive relationships underpin children's emotional security and support their growing confidence.

Generally, key-person systems are effective and ensure children feel understood, supported and happy throughout the day. Children follow clear hygiene routines and staff teach them how to keep themselves safe during activities, which further enhances their overall wellbeing. Staff demonstrate a clear understanding of safe sleeping and safe eating

practices. They closely supervise babies and they encourage children to make healthy choices at mealtimes. Staff promote emotional wellbeing through cuddles, conversation and sensitive modelling of language, helping children to express themselves and regulate their feelings.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Overall, children benefit from a well-designed curriculum that clearly sets out what leaders and staff want them to know and do. Babies show high levels of engagement as they eagerly explore their environment, with staff positioned alongside, to support their play and development effectively. Interactions are purposeful and supported with lots of language. Staff skilfully add words to children's sentences and encourage conversations. Children are happy, settled and confidently choose activities that interest them. Staff promote learning through play, supporting children's problem-solving skills with puzzles, block building and musical exploration. Children willingly share resources with adults and engage in positive, collaborative play, reflecting secure relationships and respectful staff practice. Staff consistently interact with children in a kind, attentive manner that nurtures communication, confidence and engagement. Play and learning is child-centred and responsive, enabling children to explore freely while receiving appropriate support from staff that helps to build their confidence and knowledge.

Across the setting, children, including those who are learning to speak English, develop a love of books and stories. They listen attentively as staff read a story about shadows, engaging in lively discussion and demonstrating a secure understanding of what shadows are and when they appear. Children also explore early mathematical ideas as they learn and talk about seeds and fruit, noticing their different shapes and sizes. Staff interact well with children and support their communication and language development. For example, in their play, children confidently adopt imaginative roles, such as construction builders. Staff encourage them to use language to describe their actions, negotiate roles and build on their vocabulary.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders and staff create an inclusive environment where children's cultures, languages and family backgrounds are valued. They typically get to know each child and their family well and have a secure understanding of the children and the families that attend. Generally, staff identify children's needs through observations, discussions with parents and ongoing assessment to ensure children receive support appropriately. However, at times, leaders and staff do not always follow up on advice and referrals to other professionals to remove emerging barriers to children's learning when they arise. This means that there can be delays to children receiving advice and support from specialists and external partners.

Staff use the sensory room thoughtfully to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who need help regulating their emotions. Typically, leaders work closely with external professionals to help ensure they meet children's needs successfully. As a result, children are increasingly well supported, make progress and thrive

in the setting. Leaders have a clear understanding of how to use additional funding to suitably support children, such as providing specific resources.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders know the setting's context well and use positive community engagement to enrich children's learning experiences. They draw effectively on local opportunities, enabling children to develop a secure sense of belonging and curiosity about the world around them. Staff morale is high, and leaders manage workload sensitively. This contributes to the warm, welcoming and inclusive atmosphere that is evident throughout the nursery. Leaders have a generally clear understanding of what needs to improve and take purposeful steps to strengthen practice. Since the last inspection, they have enhanced outdoor learning, and, more recently, reviewed staffing arrangements. Overall, leaders demonstrate commitment, reflection and ambition. They remain focused on ensuring all children benefit from high-quality experiences every day.

Leaders take a thoughtful approach to professional development, offering targeted training that support staff to refine their practice, including enhancing behaviour management techniques and strategies. Staff speak positively about the support they receive and feel valued as part of the team. Leaders work closely with parents and carers, recognising the importance of positive parent partnerships in promoting children's progress. They communicate effectively and keep families well informed about what is happening in the setting. Parents describe how their children have formed close, trusting relationships with all staff and express appreciation for the nurturing environment leaders have created.

Compulsory Childcare Register requirements

This setting has met the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register.

How we check if a provider meets the requirements of the Compulsory Childcare Register

When we check if settings meet the Compulsory Childcare Register requirements, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met
 - Not met
-
-

What it's like to be a child at this setting

Children arrive and settle quickly. They enjoy a well-planned and stimulating curriculum which successfully builds on what children already know and can do. Children participate in a broad range of experiences, including community visits, beach school and celebrations linked to cultural festivals. They develop curiosity and independence, supported by staff who encourage them to take turns, and make healthy choices. Older children demonstrate an early mathematical understanding, confidently comparing weights and using vocabulary such as 'lighter' and 'heavier' to demonstrate their secure knowledge and understanding. They show a positive understanding of expectations, taking responsibility for table setting with minimal adult intervention, reflecting embedded practice and a sense of belonging.

Children experience warm, nurturing relationships with staff who know them well and help them feel settled, welcomed and valued. Babies benefit from close, warm relationships with their key person and staff. Children share warm, nurturing interactions, and staff closely supervise children to help them feel secure. Children show confidence to explore indoors and outdoors, engaging in meaningful conversations with staff who extend their language and thinking successfully. For example, they discuss shapes as they look at different fruit. Children achieve well and make positive progress during their time at the setting. They are well prepared for the next steps in their development and the eventual move to school.

Children behave well, develop very positive attitudes to learning and are respectful and polite. They listen to instructions, for instance, they take turns to serve themselves lunch and socialise well with their peers and the adults who care for them. Children learn to be sociable, they look out for one another and show empathy and concern if their friends become upset.

Next steps

- Leaders should consistently maintain swift and sustained adaptations and support for children when emerging needs arise.

About this inspection

The inspector spoke with leaders, staff, a special educational needs coordinator, parents and children during the inspection.

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.

A quality assurance visit by an additional inspector was carried out at this inspection.

Inspector:

Michelle Heimsoth

About this setting

Unique reference number (URN): EY471235

Address:

St Johns Church
Apsley Road
Bristol
BS8 2ST

Type: Childcare on non-domestic premises

Registration date: 31/10/2013

Registered person: Mama Bear's Day Nursery Ltd

Register(s): EYR, CCR

Operating hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday : 08:00 - 17:00

Local authority: Bristol City of

Facts and figures used on inspection

This data was available to the inspector at the time of the inspection.



This data is from 10 September 2026

Children numbers

Age range of children at the time of inspection

0 to 4

Total number of places

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other settings can learn from it.

Strong standard

The setting reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The setting is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The setting needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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