

Inspection of Beach Buddies Ilfracombe

High Street, Ilfracombe EX34 9QB

Inspection date:

2 July 2025 - 4 August 2025

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is inadequate

The nursery's existing safeguarding practices do not meet statutory requirements. There are instances where child protection issues are not addressed promptly, which affects children's safety and welfare. Staff understand child protection procedures, but their response is inconsistent. In addition, leaders have not taken sufficient steps to ensure those staff are suitable to work with the children.

The curriculum planning and intentions lack clear sequencing and structure, resulting in staff not consistently enhancing learning. While some staff demonstrate effective engagement with the children, this practice is inconsistent across the nursery, leading to insufficient opportunities for high-quality interactions. Although staff plan some enjoyable activities that reflect children's interests, these do not sufficiently support the development of essential skills for learning and growth.

Staff greet children warmly as they arrive at the nursery. Children demonstrate confidence in initiating their own play, and staff respond attentively to children's emotional needs by offering comfort and reassurance when necessary. However, weak staff engagement leads to fewer quality interactions, limiting support for children's communication and language development. Furthermore, staff do not understand what children need to learn next or how play experiences support their development. This does not set children up to succeed and has a detrimental impact on children's attitudes to their early learning.

The nursery has undergone a high staff turnover in a short period. This has led to weaknesses in the key-person system and inconsistencies in the planning and implementation of the curriculum for some children. Leaders acknowledge this and have begun taking steps to improve standards in the nursery.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- The provider has failed to ensure that they have effective oversight of the setting. With particular regard to ensuring the suitability of all staff who work with children. Consequently, at times, leaders have not obtained enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks for all staff. As a result, they cannot ensure that those working with the children are suitable. Furthermore, some staff whose suitability has not been confirmed are left unsupervised, caring for children, placing children's safety at potential risk.
- Staff do not consistently carry out risk assessments to ensure resources are safe and appropriate for children. As a result, babies and children under three sometimes access materials without adequate supervision. For instance, babies use a climbing frame arch without proper supervision, resulting in incidents where they bounce or stumble onto the floor.

- Although funding is allocated to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, weaknesses in the quality of education mean that these funds are not used effectively to close the gaps in children's learning. This puts children at a significant disadvantage.
- The provider has not implemented an effective key-person system. In the pre-school room, children are not assigned a consistent key person. Staff who know the children well do not routinely assess their progress. As a result, assessments are often inaccurate and fail to inform purposeful planning for what children need to learn next.
- The quality of staff interactions and teaching varies. In the toddler and pre-school rooms, leaders have not ensured that staff consistently engage with children in purposeful ways. Opportunities for participation are limited, and staff do not effectively support or extend children's communication and language. As a result, children's development in this prime area is not securely promoted. In contrast, younger children in the baby room received more effective support, with staff modelling language and giving children time to respond.
- Staff encourage self-care and independence from an early stage. Babies are encouraged to use spoons during meals, promoting their ability to feed themselves. Toddlers and pre-schoolers wash their hands before eating and independently pour their drinks. This approach supports the development of self-confidence and resilience in children.
- The provider does not offer staff sufficient support, guidance, or effective supervision to foster their professional growth and promote their well-being. Leaders provide limited opportunities for professional development and do not ensure staff access ongoing training. Although staff engage in regular discussions as a team, these do not focus on improving teaching or delivering an ambitious curriculum. As a result, staff are unclear about how to improve their teaching, which affects the overall quality of education.
- Staff maintain regular communication with parents, supporting relationships between home and nursery. Parents receive updates about their child via in-person discussions and an online sharing platform. Staff record all accidents and incidents, and notify parents, as required. Parents say they are satisfied with the information they receive about their children's daily routines.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. There is not an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the provider must:

	Due date
ensure prompt action is taken to respond to safeguarding concerns, in line with statutory guidance to protect children from harm	31/07/2025
implement an effective key-person system in the pre-school room to meet children's care and learning needs and strengthen partnerships with parents	31/07/2025
ensure adults are suitable to work with children by carrying out all required vetting processes, including enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks	04/07/2025
implement effective supervision for leaders and staff to identify training needs, provide coaching and support, and improve teaching quality	29/08/2025
improve staff interactions with children during activities and routines to provide consistently effective support and appropriate challenge in their learning	29/08/2025
ensure adults who are unvetted are not left alone with children	04/07/2025
ensure staff use risk assessments effectively to identify risks to children's safety and welfare and take prompt action to remove or minimise them	04/07/2025
implement a varied and ambitious curriculum that supports children to engage in purposeful play to help them gain the knowledge and skills to prepare for the next stage in their learning.	29/08/2025

Setting details

Unique reference number	2792065
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10408481
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	1 to 4
Total number of places	29
Number of children on roll	30
Name of registered person	Buddies Nurseries Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	2602661
Telephone number	07412427330
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Beach Buddies Ilfracombe registered in 2024. The nursery is based in Ilfracombe, North Devon. The nursery operates all year round, from 7.30am until 6pm on Monday to Thursday, and 7.30am until 5pm on a Friday. The manager holds a level 5 qualification. There are seven other members of staff. Of these, one holds a level 6, one holds level 2, one holds level 3, and one is unqualified. In addition, the setting employ three apprentices. The nursery provides government-funded childcare.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors

Vicky Burns
Sarah Madge
Marie Swindells

Inspection activities

- As a result of information received, due to safeguarding concerns about the provider, an inspection was carried out.
- The manager talked to the inspectors about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- The children engaged with the inspectors during the inspection.
- The inspectors talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspectors spoke to parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspectors looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- The inspectors spoke with the area manager about the leadership and management of the setting.
- The inspectors observed interactions between staff and children.
- The manager and inspectors carried out a joint observation of a physical activity in the garden.
- The inspectors observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspection started on 2 July 2025. The inspector conducted a phone call on 4 August 2025 to gather additional evidence in line with Ofsted inspections and visits: Deferring, pausing and gathering additional evidence policy.

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.

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