

The Forum Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY280060
Inspection date	24 May 2007
Inspector	Christine Myerscough / Patricia Graham
Setting Address	The Forum Centre, Forum Square, Civic Centre, Wythenshawe, Manchester, Lancashire, M22 5RX
Telephone number	0161 436 8337
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Registered person	Buffer Bear Ltd
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet 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?

The Forum Nursery opened in 2004 and is one of several nurseries run by Buffer Bear Limited. It operates from four rooms in a purpose-built building. It is situated in the Wythenshawe area of Manchester. A maximum of 100 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 and closes on bank holidays. All children share access to an outdoor play area.

There are currently 92 children aged from five months to under five years on roll. Of these, 14 children are in receipt of nursery education funding. The nursery currently supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities and also children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 28 members of staff. Of these, 19 hold appropriate early years qualifications and three staff are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Positive steps are taken to minimise the risk of cross-infection and protect children's health. Staff implement consistent hygiene practices, such as wiping surfaces with anti-bacterial spray and wearing disposable aprons and gloves when changing nappies. There are good standards of cleanliness across the nursery. Visitors are asked to remove their shoes or wear a protective foot covering before entering the room where there are crawling babies. A separate milk kitchen is available with appropriate equipment for the safe preparation and storage of babies' bottles. Through daily routines, children are developing an awareness of simple hygiene practices as they wash and dry their hands independently. Clear procedures are in place regarding the exclusion of children who become ill. This enables staff to act in the best interests of all children to prevent the spread of infection.

Children are well nourished and enjoy a varied diet to promote their growth and development. They experience a range of foods, such as curries, vegetable chilli and chicken chasseur. Children eagerly tuck into their meals. To satisfy their appetite, they confidently request extra portions. Regular drinks, which include water, keep them well refreshed. Appropriate support is given from staff to encourage younger children to feed themselves. This promotes their growing independence.

Children engage in a suitable range of activities, which contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They benefit from fresh air and exercise as regular use is made of the spacious outdoor area. As they kick and throw balls, they gain in confidence and develop their coordination. Fixed play equipment, such as a wobbly bridge, provides challenging opportunities for children to explore their physical capabilities. A weekly soccer tot's session provides fun experiences as children practise their ball skills and play with hoops.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Children's safety is at risk because sections of the outdoor area are not safe and secure. Children attempt to climb through gaps under the fencing and are able to open gates. There are protruding nails on the fencing, which could cause harm. Children are not always supervised by staff on outdoor play equipment. As a consequence, they fall off the balancing beam. Indoors, some of the radiator covers in the play rooms have sharp edges and low-level electric sockets are exposed. Children independently open the play room door as handles are accessible. To prevent unauthorised entry into the nursery, access is effectively managed through the use of an intercom system. Children take part in monthly emergency evacuation drills to become aware and familiar with safe practices.

Children are cared for in a bright and welcoming environment. Their photographs and art work are on display across the nursery to create inviting surroundings. This helps children to feel at ease and develop a sense of belonging. The layout of the furniture is well organised so children have a good amount of space to explore their surroundings. There is a sufficient amount of toys and equipment to meet children's developing needs. Resources are generally well organised and most are maintained in a suitable condition. Children make independent choices and freely select toys, which stimulate their interests.

Children's welfare is suitably safeguarded. Procedures regarding child protection matters have recently been updated in line with Local Safeguarding Children Board guidelines. Staff have a satisfactory awareness of their roles and responsibilities in the event of identifying a child protection concern.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are content and settled within the nursery. A clear routine for the day helps them to feel secure. Staff are using the 'Birth to three matters' framework to guide the planning of activities. As a result, children are motivated to learn and play purposefully. Playing with water, crushed cereal and glue encourages children to explore using their senses. They develop their concentration levels as they experiment with paint and dig in the sand. Outdoors, they take an interest in watering their seeds and watching plants grow. Babies enjoy banging spoons against metal objects and making a noise. They listen to the sounds of musical instruments and show amazement as they play with jelly.

Children are confident communicators and express their feelings and desires. They talk excitedly about their experiences at home and staff respond appropriately by listening and asking questions. As staff and children play together in the home corner, they eagerly identify the names of play fruit and make the sounds of different animals.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage. They provide an adequate range of activities, which promotes learning in each of the six areas. Some observational records of children's progress are completed to monitor their development. However, they do not fully inform future planning for the next steps in children's learning. This means records are not effective in tracking children's progress through the stepping stones.

Children display good levels of confidence and wave goodbye as they separate from their parents and carers. They use their initiative as they set the table for lunch and develop self-help skills as they put on their coats with minimum support. Children engage in conversation with their friends. They use words to elaborate their ideas and have good opportunities to learn new words as they sing their favourite songs. Children independently select and take an interest in books. They use number and counting in planned activities, such as small group times. As they make complex models, they show interest in shape, size and pattern and confidently use mathematical language in their play.

Children have good opportunities to explore and investigate. They look closely at worms as they make a wormery and describe different features of bark from the trees. Discussions about the weather enable children to become aware of changes in their environment. Children are familiar with using information technology equipment as they operate the computer with confidence. Children develop their skills with their hands, for example, they use knives to cut their sausages and use tools with increasing skill. As they play chasing games in the outdoor area, they negotiate space successfully. Dressing up in costumes and engaging in role play builds children's imagination. They explore texture and colour as they create their collage using a range of materials.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is inadequate.

Children from a variety of backgrounds are warmly welcomed. Boys and girls have equal access to equipment and freely express themselves. Children are gaining a positive view of others and the world around them as they play with a suitable range of resources reflecting diversity. They engage in activities linked to various festivals. For example, during Chinese New Year, they have opportunities to taste Chinese food and practise their skills using chop sticks. Important events in children's lives, such as birthdays, are celebrated with a cake so they feel special. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are sufficiently cared for and positive steps are taken to promote inclusion. Staff work closely with parents and outside agencies to organise and plan adequate activities, to ensure children's needs are met. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children generally behave well. They are learning to share and act responsibly as they help to keep their surroundings tidy. As they make models using building bricks, they play cooperatively together. Staff promote children's self-esteem through the use of praise and encouragement. This helps children to feel good about themselves and proud of their achievements.

The partnership with parents and carers for the nursery education is satisfactory. Relevant information about the Foundation Stage curriculum is on display around the nursery to inform parents about the education on offer. However, parents are not fully kept abreast about their child's progress as developmental records are not consistently kept up-to-date. Staff have not yet developed useful ways to encourage parents to be involved in their child's learning or extend activities at home. Parents are generally happy about the care on offer and speak positively about the nursery. They find staff approachable and value the daily record sheet which provides useful information about their child's day, sleeping patterns and food intake. This promotes consistency of care for children. However, the nursery complaints log does not have the required detail in line with requirements of the National Standards. Therefore, parents are not fully informed about how concerns are dealt with and action taken. This is a breach of regulations.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

Vetting procedures ensure children are protected. Thorough checks are carried out on staff prior to their employment to establish their suitability to care for children. A range of policies based on the National Standards are in place. Suitable systems, such as monthly staff meetings and regular supervision of staff, enable managers to improve communication and develop staff performance. As a result, staff are beginning to establish a team approach in the care of children. However, staff are not deployed effectively across the nursery at all times throughout the day. This means children do not always receive appropriate levels of support to ensure their welfare. In the main, records are well organised and stored securely to maintain confidentiality. However, the arrangements to ensure all records meet with regulations are not effective. Therefore, these procedures and practices compromise children's safety and well-being.

The leadership and management of the nursery education are satisfactory. Children make sound progress because staff are suitably supported in their delivery of the curriculum. The management team are committed to developing staff's knowledge through relevant training. There are good systems in place to improve the education provision, for example, quality support managers and an early year's teacher work closely with the team and monitor performance by offering regular support and guidance. This positively enhances children's learning.

Overall, the provision does not meet the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the provider agreed to review the organisation of meal times, ensure fire doors are not obstructed and maintain an adequate temperature around the building.

Mealtimes are a relaxed and social occasion. Children sit together at the table with staff and have plenty of time to enjoy their food. Staff ensure fire doors are free from obstructions to keep children safe. Windows open to provide good ventilation across the nursery and a comfortable temperature is maintained to ensure children's welfare.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, Ofsted received concerns in relation to National Standard 1: Suitable Person, National Standard 2: Organisation, National Standard 6: Safety, National Standard 7: Health and National Standard 12: Working in Partnership with Parents. An inspector visited the provision on 30 August 2006. Actions were raised and satisfactorily met by the registered provider. The provider remains qualified for registration.

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, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- assess the risks to children in relation to the security and safety of the outdoor play area, the low-level electric sockets, the sharp radiator covers and children's access to the play room doors and take action to minimise these
- ensure children are supervised on outdoor play equipment
- ensure the complaints log has the required detail in line with regulations
- ensure staff are deployed effectively within the nursery to ensure the safety and welfare of children.

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

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 observations are used to inform future planning for children's next steps of learning
- keep parents informed about their children's progress and work in partnership with parents to extend children's learning at home.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk