

Red Fox Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	116677
Inspection date	07 February 2008
Inspector	Rosemary Davies
Setting Address	c/o Foxes Piece School, Newfield Road, Marlow, Buckinghamshire, SL7 1JW
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Registered person	Katrina Marjory Margaret Willsher
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?

Red Fox Day Nursery registered in 1993. It is one of two nurseries privately owned by the same proprietors. It operates from a single storey building within the grounds of Foxes Piece School, close to the centre of Marlow, Buckinghamshire. Children are accommodated according to age in four rooms, with regular access to outdoor play areas. The nursery opens for five week days all year round, with the exception of bank holidays and a week between Christmas and New Year. Sessions run from 08.00 until 18.00.

The nursery caters for a maximum of 52 children under the age of eight years, at any one time. There are currently 116 children from seven months to five years on roll. Of these, 19 receive funding for nursery education. The nursery supports children who speak English as an additional language. Children attend for a variety of sessions. They come from a wide area, including the towns of Marlow, High Wycombe and Maidenhead, together with the surrounding villages.

The nursery has 21 staff who work with the children, of whom 12 have appropriate early years qualifications at Level 2 or above. Regular support is available from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

All children benefit from regular fresh air and exercise, including babies, who are taken out for daily walks. Babies have lots of room to start to move around and practise standing up. Older children use a range of equipment to develop their physical skills appropriately. More challenging climbing equipment is available to those who need it, in the adventure playground.

Children use a suitably clean nursery environment, as staff follow stipulated procedures closely to maintain good hygiene. Food debris is swept up immediately after meal times; babies' high chairs are cleaned thoroughly after use and laundry is undertaken daily. Babies have their hands wiped after nappy changes, toddlers learn to wipe their faces after eating and all older children develop independence in their personal hygiene routines, knowing they wash their hands after using the toilet. However, there is no clear expectation that children wash their hands prior to eating, which places them at risk of cross infection.

Staff keep first aid skills updated and are very caring to children who become unwell whilst at the nursery. However, staff do not always take parental signatures before giving children prescribed medication, which is a breach of the National Standards. The nursery does not have effective procedures in place to ensure that this does not happen. Parents receive clear guidance on when they should keep their children at home. A list of illnesses considered as 'notifiable' is displayed. However, not all staff are aware of these and senior staff lack awareness that the regulator, Ofsted, must be informed of any such occurrences, as stipulated in the National Standards.

Children enjoy hearty meals, such as turkey stew, which are freshly prepared and cooked on the premises. Overall, a good nutritional and healthy balanced menu plan is provided over a period of four weeks, although there is a tendency towards sweet biscuits each morning for the older children and a number of sweet puddings. However, fresh fruit is available every afternoon and strong emphasis is placed on providing fresh vegetables. Kitchen hygiene is good with food properly stored and prepared. Babies drink according to their needs and are offered fresh drinking water through the day. Older children drink water with some meals but it is not readily available for them to help themselves.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Children use bright and welcoming nursery rooms, made inviting with attractive displays of the children's work. Children use good quality resources. Rooms offer lots of space for children to move around, with substantial areas of wipeable flooring for 'messy' play activities, together with large areas of carpet which support construction play and areas for children to sit quietly to look at books. Not all space is effectively used, however, particularly for the older groups of children. Rooms are not set up effectively to support children to explore and investigate during their independent play.

The nursery is not secure. Visitors gain entry to the nursery unchallenged, as the entrance is not monitored, so putting children at risk. Other potential risks to children's safety are identified and minimised well. The outdoor play area has a new safety surface; staff follow written guidelines and stack children's chairs only four high; the Walk Book is filled out consistently

when children are taken out of the nursery and procedures for collecting children from school are thorough.

Although some staff have undertaken recent training on how to safeguard children's welfare, as part of gaining a qualification, others have not updated their understanding for many years. The nursery's policy on child protection does not provide staff with sufficiently clear direction, as to what procedures they must follow if they suspect children are at risk of harm. The nursery does not have a copy of relevant guidance on safeguarding children's welfare. Consequently, children are placed at risk owing to staff lacking knowledge and clear guidelines.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children throughout the nursery are happy and settled. They separate easily from their main carers, enjoying the activities provided for them. Babies are stimulated well, accessing a broad range of suitable activities. All children learn through using their senses to find out about the world around them. However, there is a dominance of adult-directed activities undertaken in either large or small groups, which allow children little time to learn through self-chosen play and to explore what interests them individually. Hence, learning is not always matched to their personal requirements. Staff plan and execute group activities well, however, using puppet props during rhymes to help sustain children's interest. Relationships are relaxed and friendly. Staff always engage fully with the children, speaking to them appropriately and being kind and caring towards them. They praise children to encourage their efforts further, such as when babies and toddlers try to feed themselves, so helping to develop their self-confidence.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage because staff have a secure understanding of what is required. Planning covers all aspects of the six areas of learning effectively over a period. However, the programme of learning is delivered mainly through large and small group activities, which dominate sessions. Insufficient time is allowed for activities which children choose for themselves and these activities are not set up to reflect the learning aims of the group sessions. This means that children cannot have another go at practising new skills or revisit fresh ideas in their self-chosen play, spending as long as they need to investigate, explore and consolidate their learning.

Nevertheless, children enjoy the adult-led activities provided. These centre on appropriate topics, such as the Chinese New Year and help children learn about others. Topics expand children's vocabularies to include words such as 'chopsticks' as they do so. Staff sometimes allow children to take the lead in these activities, such as when children decide to make hand prints in playdough before making model 'dragons'. Staff take the opportunity to encourage children's early mathematical development by comparing the size of handprints and deciding which are the largest and smallest. They count how many fingers on each hand and how many there are all together. At such times, learning is closely matched to children's individual needs as staff know the children's abilities well and tailor questioning appropriately, encouraging them to think. Staff evaluate the effectiveness of these small-group activities to assess children's progress. However, they do not establish children's starting points when they first start in the Foundation Stage, nor do they involve parents and carers in this process, so planned learning is not necessarily matched to individual children's needs.

Children behave well when in a group altogether. They know the routines of the day and what is expected of them. They listen carefully during story times, contributing their own ideas about what it means to 'feel sad'. Staff skilfully help children to understand their feelings. Children's personal, social and emotional development is developed well at such times. Children try to put on coats by themselves and pour their own drinks at snack time, which encourages their independence but many opportunities are missed to encourage this further. The monitoring process does not identify these weaknesses.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children receive a warm welcome in this nursery, including those learning English as an additional language. Staff understand that some children have learning difficulties or physical difficulties and have appropriate arrangements in place for such children, although none attends currently. Staff treat children as individuals. Babies and toddlers have their individual sleep patterns accommodated, for example.

Children throughout the nursery behave well. Staff adopt a positive, consistent approach and children respond appropriately. Older children learn to be considerate of the younger ones, knowing they must move quietly around the nursery as toddlers and babies sleep. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff obtain detailed information about what children can already do when they first come to the nursery, however, this good practice does not extend to involving parents and carers in assessment of children in the pre-school room. Parents and carers speak warmly of the flexible settling in process and of what staff do to look after their children. They find staff approachable and most feel they receive suitable information about their children's development. However, parents and carers do not receive any written information about their children's progress in the Foundation Stage, with the exception of records when children leave the nursery to start school. Parents and carers of the pre-school children are not encouraged to be involved with their children's learning at home to help follow up the work of the nursery. The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. A complaints log is in place but parents and carers do not receive information about how to contact the regulator, Ofsted, should they so wish.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

The setting does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. There is no rigorous system to ensure that all who volunteer in the nursery, such as students, are cleared as suitable to be with children. Evidence of staff suitability to work with children was not available during the inspection. New staff work through an induction folder which guides them into the nursery's methods. However, some policies lack clear procedures, such as that for child protection. There is no designated member of staff for either child protection or behaviour management issues, to act as a point of reference for all staff. Procedures detailed in health and safety policies for maintaining children's good health and keeping them safe are not effective, placing children at risk. Policies and procedures are not reviewed and updated regularly.

Paperwork is kept securely. Most staff in the nursery hold appropriate qualifications. They receive encouragement to train and develop their skills. Overall, space is well organised, although rooms for the older children not set up to encourage their independent play effectively. All children participate in a range of suitable activities, including regular use of the outdoor area.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff know their individual roles and responsibilities and are good role-models to the children. The Registered Person, who is a qualified teacher, oversees the planning system. Senior staff monitor the effectiveness of the programme delivered through observing and assessing children's developing knowledge and skills during the small-group activities. However, the system is not sufficiently rigorous to identify weaknesses in children's learning, such as in their independent play. The local authority early years advisory teacher has not provided support within the preschool room for some time, other than advising the nursery's special educational needs coordinator.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection of nursery education, no key issues were identified for improvement but staff were asked to consider improving evaluation of small-group activities. This has been achieved with the result that staff have a clearer understanding of children's abilities.

Following the last inspection for care, two recommendations were made for improvement. These related to sharing information with parents; children's safety; the complaints procedure and the giving of medication. Parents and carers receive verbal information about their children's progress and development and they are given written details of their children's progress on leaving the setting, although they do not receive any other written information during their children's time in the nursery. The daily registers are now kept appropriately, so that an accurate historical record is maintained. The complaints procedure still does not give information about Ofsted's role or contact details. The nursery still does not comply with requirements of the National Standards for the giving of medication; consequently this recommendation becomes an action.

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

- maintain a rigorous system to check that all who volunteer in the nursery are suitable to do so and that evidence of staff suitability to work with children is available for inspection
- ensure that all adults working and looking after children in the nursery are up to date with their knowledge of child protection and able to put the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board into practice
- ensure that entrance to the nursery is monitored effectively, in order to maintain children's safety
- obtain written permission from parents and/or carers before administering medication to 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):

- further develop the system to evaluate the effectiveness of the nursery education, so that it is sufficiently rigorous to identify any weaknesses for improvement
- achieve a better balance between adult led and child initiated activities
- further develop the assessment system to identify children's starting points when entering the Foundation Stage, taking account of parents and carers knowledge of their children.

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