

Child First, Bicester

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY342511
Inspection date	27 November 2007
Inspector	Jill Milton
Setting Address	32 Launton Road, Bicester, Oxfordshire, OX26 6PY
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Registered person	Child Care & Learning Group
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets 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?

Child First, Bicester is one of five nurseries run by Childcare and Learning (Ravenstone) Ltd. It registered in 2006 and is situated on the outskirts of the town of Bicester. The nursery operates from several rooms in a two storey building and all children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

The nursery is registered to accept a maximum of 166 children at any one time and currently has 65 on roll, of whom 14 receive funding for early education. The setting provides support for children who have English as an additional language. The intake of children is from a wide area and children attend for a variety of sessions.

The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 50 weeks of the year. It employs 20 members of staff, 14 of whom have appropriate qualifications. The provision receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff have a range of good procedures in place to maintain children's health. The children receive consistent reminders to wash their hands in the bathroom after visiting the toilet and the older ones understand the reason hands require washing to 'get rid of germs'. When children take part in cooking they wear calico aprons and hair coverings to help them learn about hygiene. If children require medication staff have careful procedures in place with only senior staff able to administer medicines. Staff are vigilant about washing their own hands or making use of alcohol gel when they attend to children's needs like wiping noses and these routines help to protect children from cross-infection.

Children take an active part in preparing food at the nursery and some recently introduced ideas are incorporating more activities to help children learn about good nutrition. Children draw examples of foods like sweetcorn, carrot and pear to make displays for the refurbished dining room. Children of all ages access drinking water in their rooms in named cups and they have regular snacks during the day. The staff work well with parents to ensure they are aware of any dietary intolerances or preferences. Children receive a nutritious menu of foods.

Babies follow their own routines for sleep and nourishment. They sleep in their room in new cots with a two tier design enabling mobile babies to decide when they are ready for a nap. Older children who still require a day time sleep have comfortable areas with dimmed lighting and soft covers. Staff spend time settling children by gently rocking or patting their backs. The daily routine for all children provides a good balance between rest and energetic play. Children use resources in their rooms or in the large open space of the studio to play actively and enjoy exercise. The outdoor areas are also in daily use where children use resources for climbing, balancing and developing co-ordination.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The nursery environment is improving due to an on-going programme of refurbishment. Children of all ages now enjoy spacious rooms which are brightly decorated and welcoming. Babies benefit from access to the outdoor area directly from their room so that staff can take them outside more often. Children play in comfort since the nursery is warm in cold weather and the use of music in some rooms helps to create a pleasant atmosphere. All rooms have a suitable range of equipment with many items stored in units at child-height to encourage their independence from an early age. Children are making regular use of the new wooden child-sized furniture and toys as they play. There are a few instances of equipment requiring repair such as the benches outdoors and occasionally toys like number puzzles have pieces missing though overall children have an appropriate range of resources to support all areas of their development.

Children play securely since staff supervise them at all times both indoors and outdoors. The security of the premises is under regular monitoring by the staff and daily registers are in place for all children and adults. Children talk with staff about safety issues, for example when using the slide appropriately or when preparing for a visit to the kitchen for an activity. Staff are aware of the need to practise fire evacuations and have a fire log ready to put into use. Children generally play in safety in their rooms and in the garden because staff make daily checks on

potential hazards. Whilst this is going a long way to identify many aspects there are still a few issues such as lack of finger guards on some doors to prevent possible injury.

Children's welfare is of importance to the staff and they have a secure knowledge of child protection. Managers ensure that adults working in the setting complete the required checks and there is a sound written policy in place to cover the area of child protection. This gives staff the necessary guidance to enable them to act if they have concerns for a child.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children receive comfort from staff during the day and suitable interactions from the adults engage the children in play. Babies play in a room that contains visual stimulation with primary colours and contrasting black and white patterns for them to gaze at. All children under three years take part in some sensory play that encourages them to explore texture and sound. When children play with cornflour and water they enjoy running their fingers through the mixture. Staff help children when it is time to move onto the next stage by making visits to the dining room or by spending time at play in their new group. This helps the children to gain confidence in their surroundings. Changes of scene are part of the nursery day and all children spend some time with their group and their key workers either outdoors in the fresh air or in areas like the studio room for active play. This provides the children with sufficient variety and fresh stimulation for play. Staff make suitable use of the Birth to three matters as they plan activities for the children and they make regular dated observations of their development. Delays in updating each child's records with this information may prevent staff being aware of the next steps they need to take to support development.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children show an interest in what is available to them during free play in their room. They make their own decisions about which area to play in and there are resources accessible to them. Children are sociable and are learning how to behave in a group. Children are confident to organise their own games such as musical bumps and a small friendly group operate the tape recorder and follow the rules of the game. Children are able to progress steadily with their early communication, language and literacy. They enjoy using mark-making for new signs for their baker's shop and some of them are becoming familiar with letter shapes and sounds. Children listen well to group stories and contribute with ideas to the meaning of some more difficult words. Conversations about families, the activities and the children's feelings take place during the day. Adults provide suitable support and interaction to the children.

Children use numbers for counting during story times and when they are preparing ingredients for cooking. They are learning about concepts like weight as they work with staff to measure out cheese and flour. Children have daily opportunities to play in an area of their room where they find resources to encourage matching, sorting and counting. When they sing rhymes the children are familiar with ideas about taking one away and some older ones are starting to grasp simple addition. Displays of recent topics in the room illustrate work about shape and number. Children are gaining a suitable understanding of the world as they take part in some new gardening activities and use technology. They learn about caring for living things as they help to clean the guinea pigs. Children can freely select materials for cutting or sticking and they see how tools such as a pencil sharpener are useful. By using equipment like this the children gain in their control and co-ordination. They also demonstrate their growing abilities

when they use a range of cutlery at lunch time or carefully pour drinks of water from a jug. Children express their imagination through a suitable variety of play situations. They visit the art area where they can paint freely and displays reflect the simple range of techniques they use for picture making.

Staff base plans on the Foundation Stage and they provide children with a suitable variety of opportunities to help them progress steadily along the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. The planning of the outdoor area to support each area of learning is beginning to happen though is not yet fully effective. Children have choices and ample child-initiated play which suits the more confident children well. Staff are currently reviewing the way they monitor the children's progress and they make a satisfactory range of dated observations of children's development. This information is generally taken into account when staff forward plan though there is no clear system to record this when thinking about individual needs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Parents and children receive a warm welcome on arrival at nursery. The staff have rooms ready for play so that children can engage in activities and confidently separate from their carers. Children follow familiar routines during the day and the staff fit in with parental wishes, for example by providing an optional breakfast. Children see their names and photographs on displays around the nursery to help them develop a sense of belonging. They are also starting to learn about different cultures and traditions as they play with resources such as books or dolls that present diversity in a positive way. Older children learn about celebrations from cultures different to their own. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children is fostered.

There are currently no children attending the nursery with learning difficulties or disabilities. Some room staff have experience of supporting families and working with other professionals to help children and the recently appointed person to oversee this area is receiving relevant training. A member of staff is also now in place as the designated person for behaviour management with attendance at training. Children benefit from staff understanding of how to promote positive behaviour. There are some fun examples in the day such as the routine of appointing a 'star of the day' amongst the older children. Even younger ones enjoy receiving a sticker for helping to tidy up their room. Children are learning to behave appropriately as they line up to move around the building or sit well in the dining room for meals.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents have a suitable range of printed information on view throughout the setting in order for them to be aware of the nursery's philosophy and details about their own child's room. Staff make use of white boards to share with parents the planned activities for the day and for the older ones there is appropriate information available about the educational curriculum. Staff share daily informal conversations with parents and those with babies receive written details about routine care issues like sleep patterns. Occasional activities are on offer to promote shared learning between home and nursery. Parents speak of their satisfaction with the care their children receive and the flexibility of the nursery in helping them meet their commitments.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The nursery is continuing to improve standards and most policies and procedures are now working appropriately to support the care of young children. The managerial staff are completing an operational file that draws together company policies. There is a suitable number of qualified staff on the team and senior staff are appointed to oversee extra responsibilities such as the administration of medicines to children. A number of effective improvements to the use of the premises make it a more stimulating and suitable place for children. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management are satisfactory. There are sound procedures in place for the recruitment and induction of new staff. A training matrix reveals that existing staff attend a suitable range of relevant courses linked to their work, for example behaviour management or first aid training. However a formal system of staff appraisals is not yet in place to clearly identify areas for professional development. Staff take a number of positive steps to improve their working practices and use five days a year given over specifically to support staff training. They listen to advice from other professionals and they liaise with other senior staff in the parent company to share good ideas. The managers of the nursery produce action plans to address issues raised at inspection. Documentation is stored neatly and securely at the nursery. The managers make sound use of computer generated paperwork to help staff in rooms check procedures and complete daily registers.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the quality of care was judged as inadequate and staff were required to address four actions. There have been good improvements to the hygiene arrangements across the nursery and the impact on the children is to better safeguard their health. The dining room is now in daily use enabling children to come to a clean area for their meals. Staff wear different coloured protective aprons when serving food or changing nappies and they are consistent about washing their own hands during the day. Babies are using new high chairs during meal times enabling staff to interact with them whilst managing the dishes for feeding. When snacks are served in play rooms the children wash their hands before visiting the area and they sit whilst they eat fresh fruit slices and quench their thirst.

Staff now complete daily written risk assessments for each room and the outdoor play areas. These procedures help to keep children safe and although there are some remaining issues the staff have acted responsibly in improving their procedures. Children learn something of keeping themselves safe when the adults engage in conversations with them about using equipment like a slide sensibly. With regard to staff issues during break times there is now better communication between managers and room staff. This helps to maintain suitable ratios of adults to children at all times, keeping children safe.

At the last inspection of nursery education the quality was judged inadequate and the staff were asked to address two actions to improve standards. The staff are now more confident in using the parent company's documents when planning activities for children of all ages. There is a suitable emphasis placed on both the Birth to three matters and the Foundation Stage when planning and delivering a programme to support children's development. Children in all rooms spend time engaged in a suitable range of age-appropriate activities. Although a formal appraisal system for staff requires finalising there has been good progress overall in raising both the standards of care and education in the nursery.

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 further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure records of development for the under threes are regularly updated
- continue to extend risk assessments to identify and address all potential hazards to children
- implement a system of staff appraisals to identify individual training needs.

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):

- extend the opportunities for learning through play across all areas of the curriculum in the garden
- explore more ways of working with parents to promote shared learning between home and nursery
- plan the next steps in learning for individual children to help them progress rapidly along the stepping stones towards the early learning goals.

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