



Balfour Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY308464
Inspection date	23 January 2006
Inspector	Toni Hanson
Setting Address	7 Balfour Road, Ilford, Essex, IG1 4HP
Telephone number	0208 553 1886
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Registered person	Premier Childcare Limited
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

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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?

Balfour Nursery is a private day nursery owned by Premier Childcare Limited in the London Borough of Redbridge. It originally opened in 1988 and was re-registered in July 2005 due to a change of ownership. The nursery is situated in a residential area, close to Ilford Town Centre. It operates from a converted 3 storey house and is open from 08:00 to 18:00, Monday to Friday for 51 weeks of the year. Children may attend all day or for a variety of sessions.

The nursery is registered to care for a maximum of 30 children aged 1 to under 5 years. There are currently 25 children on roll, of these, 13 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from the local and wider area. The nursery welcomes children with special needs, although there are currently none attending. The nursery currently supports a number of children with English as an additional language.

The owners employ a qualified manager to be responsible for the day-to-day running of the nursery. In addition, there are 5 staff who work directly with the children, including a qualified Montessori and 4 staff qualified to National Vocational Level 2 or 3. Of these, 3 members of staff are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit from the nursery's good hygiene practises, these meet children's health needs well. Most staff hold current, appropriate first aid qualifications, nappy changing routines are hygienic and children who sleep are provided with individually labelled sheets and blankets to prevent the risk of cross-infection. The toys and furniture used by children are clean and well-maintained. Flooring in the nursery has recently been replaced. This means that areas where children enjoy messy play and have meals can now be cleansed hygienically.

Older children are learning about the importance of personal hygiene. They know they must wash their hands after using the toilet and talk about 'germs' as they are reminded not to eat food that has been dropped on the floor. Staff working with the younger children are good role models as they wash their hands after changing nappies and before serving food and help the children wash their hands before they begin eating.

Children learn about healthy eating through project work, such as, creating collage pictures of 'healthy' and 'unhealthy' foods and joining in with discussions about foods that are good for you at lunch time. Overall, children's menus are healthy, balanced and contain fresh fruit and vegetables. Children's individual dietary requirements such as, allergies are catered for appropriately. Children are offered drinks at meal and snack times and can help themselves to jugs of water when they are thirsty at other times of the day. This helps children learn about meeting their own needs. Meal times are sociable and ensure children have time to talk and enjoy their food. Staff working with the youngest children treat meal times as an opportunity to help children become independent in feeding themselves. In the older children's base room, opportunities for children to develop personal independence at meal times are often missed, as few children are allowed to serve themselves at lunchtime.

Opportunities for children to be active, learn control of their bodies and develop their physical skills both indoors and out are good. They enthusiastically do their 'exercises' including stretching to the sky, running on the spot and making star

shapes as they jump. Children have regular access to the outdoor play equipment in the garden including a playhouse and caterpillar tunnel. They build with large milk crates, balance on the balancing beams and draw on the paving slabs with chalk. Children have frequent opportunities to practice and improve their eye hand co-ordination as they use small equipment and tools such as wooden bricks, crayons, scissors, spoons and forks. The accessibility of appropriate toys and furniture and the organisation of space in the youngest children's base room, means that they are appropriately supported to develop their physical skills such as, rolling and walking.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The nursery is appropriately decorated and maintained. Staff are beginning to make the children's base rooms welcoming through the use of displays of pictures, posters and the children's art work, although some displays are placed too high for children to see easily. Children have ample space to play and a comfortable area to rest or sleep. Toys and play resources are safe, age appropriate and stored at low-level to make sure that they are easily accessible to children. Staff regularly check the premises to ensure it is safe and suitable for children. However, risk assessments are not fully effective and consequently, hazards are not always identified, for example, ensuring nappy changing arrangements for very mobile children are safe.

Security is a priority. Staff supervise the front door as children and parents arrive and depart. The front door is then secured to make sure that children cannot leave the premises unsupervised. Appropriate procedures are in place to ensure that staff are vetted and suitable to work with children. Safety equipment is provided to keep children safe, for example, stair gates, socket covers, smoke alarms and fire fighting equipment. All staff have received training in the use of fire extinguishers to make sure that they can use these efficiently in an emergency. Children are learning how to keep themselves safe. Older children are reminded about the importance of sitting on a chair properly and using forks and child-sized scissors carefully. Younger children learn simple rules that keep them safe when they are playing, for example, holding on as they walk up the stairs and making sure they do not run with toys in their mouths.

Staff have clear policies and procedures to follow if they have child protection concerns about a child. All staff are vetted appropriately and are suitable to work with children. This and the implementation of effective systems such as, the collection of children, helps to protect children from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff create a friendly, welcoming environment where children enjoy playing and learning. Settling in procedures work well. Children are settled into the nursery gradually to ensure they get to know their key worker, the staff and the daily routine well before the placement begins. Staff use children's registration forms to help them

gather information from parents about children's routines at home, for example, favourite toys and the gestures young children make when they need toileting. The youngest children are encouraged to bring things from home to carry, suck or play with to help them move between home and a new setting. This helps children to feel secure and gives them the support they need to work out what the new experience of attending nursery is all about. Staff welcome children warmly as they arrive and most children arrive happily and separate from their parents and carers with confidence.

The youngest children enjoy opportunities to make their own choices from the broad selection of activities and toys available to them. They choose what they need to begin an activity independently, enjoy looking at books, working out how pushing buttons on a toy makes music play and using their fingers and sponges to enjoy the texture of thick paint. Young children receive the supervision and support they need to begin to develop personal independence. They are encouraged to attempt to fasten the buttons on their coats and confidently pour themselves drinks of water. Children become skilful communicators as they join in with songs and rhymes at group time, express themselves through their play and name the pictures in books at story time. Staff have a sound understanding of child development and how young children learn. They have recently attended training in the Birth to Three Framework and are beginning to use this to plan suitable activities for the youngest children, rather than adapting the Foundation Stage curriculum which is designed for children aged three and four.

Nursery education

Children enjoy their time at nursery and are excited and motivated to learn. They concentrate well and become highly involved in activities that interest them. Children are learning to play together, take turns and share. They have some opportunities to develop personal independence through selecting toys and putting on their own aprons for sand play. However, opportunities for children to further develop their self-help skills are often missed, for example, adults pour the children's drinks at snack time and staff draw and cut out shapes for their shape collages.

Children confidently speak to staff, each other and are very keen to express their thoughts and ideas at group time. They have good opportunities to recognise and name the letter of the week and enjoy bringing in items from home, beginning with this letter to share and display on the interest table. Children have frequent opportunities to practice and improve their eye hand co-ordination and early writing skills. They make patterns with their fingers in sand, use chalk to draw shapes on the paving slabs outside and learn to fasten buckles on the fastening frames. Many children can recognise and write their names with generally correctly formed letters. Children confidently count, recognise and name numbers up to ten and beyond. They sort number cards into the correct numerical order and work out how many counters are needed to represent each number. Children naturally use mathematically language through play, they know their biscuits are 'round' and make 'big' and 'little hills' in the sand. Children have few opportunities however, to explore everyday information and communication technology.

Children handle books carefully and listen quietly to stories at group time. They use their imaginations well as they make their 'fierce' plastic dinosaurs roar, fight and hide

in the sand and sea creatures 'swim' in the water tray. They have free access to a wide range of interesting collage materials, including brightly coloured feathers, sequins, glitter and glue. They regularly paint and explore the different textures of sand, glue, and dough. Children enjoy listening to music, enthusiastically sing familiar songs and rhymes and regularly explore sound and rhythm through the use of musical instruments. Although they enjoy dressing up, children have too few opportunities to express themselves imaginatively and act out familiar events in their lives through role play. Children excitedly watch the progress of the growth of their cress seeds. However, they are not involved in the care of the seeds, for example, watering their plants and consequently miss the opportunity to find out how and why things grow.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sufficient understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and children's individual needs. A broad range of interesting activities and experiences are planned and provided for children overall. Staff have clear, appropriate learning intentions for children as they supervise planned activities. However, activities are often very adult directed and do not always give children the freedom to explore their own thoughts and ideas. Staff regularly observe children and maintain records of what they do. However, the assessment records are often lists of activities children have enjoyed and do not consistently identify children's achievements and their progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Consequently, the information gathered is not used to affect forward planning and help children move to the next stage in their learning. This impacts on children's individual progress.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are welcomed and included in the life of the nursery. Children become aware of their own and each other's needs through discussions with staff and themed activities about themselves and the wider world. They learn the koala song for Australia day, eat noodles with chopsticks at Chinese New Year and dress in sari material during Diwali, the Hindu festival of light. Children have access to a sufficient range of play resources designed to increase their awareness of diversity, including books, puzzles and dolls. Children explore the local community through regular visitors to the nursery, including a police officer, dentist and a guide dog.

The bilingual staff team speak a variety of community languages and ensure that children and families who speak English as an additional language receive any support they need. The nursery's special needs co-ordinator (SENCO) is in the process of attending training to help her in her role and makes sure that appropriate systems are in place to support children with additional needs. Children's individual needs are known and met, for example, the cook caters for children with food allergies. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is appropriately fostered.

Most staff treat children with respect and use positive methods to manage children's behaviour, for example, distraction, discussion and praise. Children generally behave

well in response to the high expectations of staff. They learn to take responsibility as they help to tidy and put away toys and choose the play resources they need. Children are encouraged to say 'please' and 'thank you' when asking for biscuits at snack time. However, staff working with the older children do not always use explanation to help children understand why they must behave in a certain way, for example, wear aprons at mealtimes. Children's views and wishes are not always taken into consideration and this causes them to become frustrated when they feel they have not been listened to. Most handling of the younger children's behaviour is consistent and takes into account their ages and levels of maturity. However, daily routines such as meal times are not always organised to meet the needs of young children, as they are expected to sit for long periods waiting for food to arrive and this impacts on their behaviour.

The partnership with parents is satisfactory. Strong, informal relationships between staff and parents help children to feel secure. Parents receive useful information about the setting and are kept well-informed about their child's day through discussions with key workers and daily written reports. These keep parents up-to-date with children's care, for example, what they have eaten, sleep times and activities they have enjoyed. Parents value the friendly, informal approach of staff and feel confident to discuss concerns. Parents of 3 and 4-year-old-children receive basic information about the Foundation Stage curriculum through the nursery prospectus. Information about current topic and themes are displayed and parents are encouraged to support their children's learning by bringing in items to share from home. Children's records and work folders are available for parents to view at any time. However, parents of funded children receive limited information about their child's ongoing progress towards the early learning goals and have too few opportunities to discuss their child's next steps for development, which affects their ability to fully contribute to their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's care and education is promoted through the satisfactory leadership and management of the nursery. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and work well together as a team. Most policies and procedures are known and implemented appropriately. Consequently, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Procedures for the recruitment and vetting of staff ensure they have appropriate qualifications and experience and undertake the necessary checks to ensure they are suitable to work with children. All the required documentation is in place, up-to-date and stored securely. This contributes to the safe and efficient management of the nursery.

Staff are supported appropriately by the new management team through regular staff meetings, daily discussions and the manager's informal observations of staff practice. Staff have regular opportunities to further develop their knowledge and skills through attending training that interests them. Staff's strengths are acknowledged and new information learnt is shared with the whole staff team. Systems to monitor and evaluate risk assessments, daily teaching practice and the recording of children's

assessments are planned, but not yet in place. This means that not all potential safety risks to children are identified, staff training needs are not consistently identified and met and children's assessments are not always used effectively to affect forward planning and help them make progress in their learning.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since 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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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):

- improve systems to identify safety risks to children and take action to minimise these
- ensure the settings behaviour management policy is fully understood and followed by all staff

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):

- improve the assessments of children's progress and use these to guide teaching and planning
- improve the systems to monitor and evaluate teaching, the recording of

children's assessments, curriculum planning and the impact these have on children's individual progress

- improve opportunities for parents to be informed about children's achievements and progress towards the early learning goals

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