

Foxcubs Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	101851
Inspection date	27 February 2008
Inspector	Linda Janet Witts
Setting Address	Chapel House, Old Reddings Road, The Reddings, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL51 6SA
Telephone number	01452 857449
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Registered person	Helen Foxley
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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Foxcubs Day Nursery registered in 2000. The nursery is registered to care for 50 children and offers full day care for children from birth to five years. It is open from 08.00 to 18.00, Monday to Friday. Foxcubs serves both the local community and those from outside the immediate area. There are currently 97 children on roll. Children in receipt of nursery education funding are accepted and there are currently 11 funded three-year-olds and 27 funded four-year-olds. Children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are welcome.

The nursery is situated in a detached house in the Reddings area of Cheltenham, on the outskirts of the town centre. Within the premises children are cared for in age related groups. Each group has its own base room. There is a sensory room, art rooms, toilet and sleep facilities. There is a child-friendly garden divided into areas; an area for babies with play equipment suited to their age and stage of development, a hard surfaced area with wooden boat and fort, a small play space used freely by the pre-school group, and an area with a roadway marked on the surface for use with wheeled toys.

There are 16 staff members working directly with the children all of whom have childcare training equivalent to National Vocational Qualifications at level two or three. The majority of the staff have also received first aid and child protection training. The nursery uses aspects of the Highscope approach to teaching and receives support from the local Early Years Foundation Stage Consultants.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are actively encouraged to be healthy. They learn about good hygiene practice and healthy eating. Mostly children get plenty of fresh air and exercise. In their quest for independent personal care children are supported well by staff. Children, from a young age, learn to wash their hands before they eat. Sinks are positioned at low level or 'step-ups' are provided to help children to reach the basins successfully. Older children routinely go to wash their hands after messy activities and picture prompts are displayed as a reminder to wash their hands after using the toilet. Babies' comfort is ensured by the prompt response from staff to change soiled nappies. Nappy changing procedures effectively minimise the risk of cross-infection. The nursery is maintained to a high level of cleanliness and there are clear procedures to be followed by staff to minimise the risk of cross-infection. Children see how the adults wipe tables before and after meal times, sweep and mop the floors, to keep the nursery clean. Children with runny noses are encouraged to wipe them and then wash their hands. Staff will wipe the noses of babies and younger children, disposing of tissues hygienically and usually remembering to wash or use gel cleanser to clean their hands after. Outdoor shoes are removed by staff, parents and visitors before entering the baby room, helping to ensure that the floor surface is clean for babies to lie, roll and crawl on. Shoes are also removed before entering the sensory room, as children will often lie on the floor in here to relax. Babies, toddlers and young children sleep according to their needs. Older children tend not to have a sleep but can relax as they wish and tend to do so where comfortable cushions are provided, such as in the book area or sensory room. The under three-year-old children routinely clean their teeth after they wake from their sleep.

Children's medical and dietary needs are discussed with parents and information disseminated to all staff involved in the children's care. This ensures that particular needs are fully taken into account. Effective procedures are implemented in relation to the administration of medication and to deal with any accidents.

Children of all ages enjoy a broad range of outdoor play activities. The nursery garden is an exciting play space, cleverly designed to create child orientated areas that promote different types of physical development. In one area children can practise their skills in manoeuvring wheeled toys, such as, tricycles, tandem tricycles, scooters and sit-in vehicles. They push, pedal and propel the equipment and will move around the roadway marked out on the hard-surface area at speed, avoiding obstacles. Another area has a fort that they can climb and here they can peer over the top or use strategically placed peep-holes to watch passing trains. There are also lower level climbing structures and a wooden boat that children can climb in and out of and slide down the attached slides. A separate baby area is available with equipment that is suited to their stages of development. Babies are taken outside most days. Indoors, babies can roll, stretch and can utilise furniture and adults to pull themselves up to stand and to practise early walking skills. The toddlers and other children under the age of three gain confidence in their walking skills. They move between rooms, learn to climb on and off chairs safely and join

in movement activities. The older pre-school children are physically agile. They demonstrate this as they move around the pre-school room and between indoor and outdoor areas. They join in music and movement and physical education sessions enthusiastically. There is a plentiful supply of physical play resources for children to use, such as, balls and a large parachute.

Children eat healthy nutritious meals and snacks. All meals incorporate fresh produce and the menu contains plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables. Menus are adapted to accommodate different dietary requirements and a vegetarian option is always available. The cook and her assistant prepare the meals each day and are fully aware of children's dietary needs. Children are encouraged to try new foods and staff will often plan food tasting and cooking activities that children enjoy. Hungry children are offered more to satisfy their needs. Babies and toddlers are offered drinks regularly and older children can help themselves to their own drinks bottles or cups, as they wish. The pre-school children learn about foods that are good for them. For example, they know that milk can make their bones strong.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming and secure environment. Access to the provision is closely monitored, with a close circuit television, security system. Children and their parents/carers are greeted at the door by designated personnel. Records of children, staff and visitors' arrival and departure are made and the identity of unfamiliar individuals checked. Children are supervised well, with closer supervision used as appropriate, to keep children safe. For example, when children use cocktail sticks or knives in food preparation, when playing outdoors or on outings. An adult remains with those children who are sleeping in order to monitor their safety.

Children's safety is given high priority. A health and safety officer carries out regular checks on equipment and produces documented evidence of risk assessment. Action to minimise risks is highlighted to staff through induction when they commence employment and within the nurseries written policies and procedures. Occasionally potential hazards go unnoticed by staff as they arise during the course of nursery operations. Children learn to keep themselves safe. They follow adult instructions and are reminded not to engage in actions that compromise their safety or the safety of others. For example, a child is alerted to the danger of slipping, as he kneels on a chair. Regular fire practises familiarise children with emergency evacuation procedures and ensure that all staff know the procedure to assist in the evacuation of the babies and toddlers whose playrooms are on the first floor. All staff are clear of their roles and responsibilities with regard to safe evacuation. A fire box contains children's details and blankets. This is routinely collected from its position along one of the many fire evacuation routes, together with a specially designed trolley into which babies can be placed to keep them safe.

Equipment and resources used by children are well-maintained and checked to ensure that they are safe for purpose. Each play room has a broad range of toys and resources, that are appropriate for the children's different ages and stages of development.

Children's welfare is further safeguarded and promoted through the staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and procedures. A very high percentage of staff are trained in child protection and hold up-to-date certificates.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Many aspects of children's enjoyment and achievement are outstanding. Children thoroughly enjoy themselves at nursery. They receive excellent support from all of the nursery's caring, enthusiastic staff. Children are cared for within age-related groups and each have their own allocated key-carer.

Babies are nurtured and gain confidence and self-assurance to explore and investigate their surroundings. Staff interact playfully with them. Babies smile and babble as the adults talk, sing to them and respond to the sounds and gestures they make. The babies investigate the contents of 'treasure baskets' using their senses to explore the objects, such as, wood, plastic and metal curtain rings, bath scrunchies and wooden spoons. Activities such as, exploring shredded paper provide further sensory experiences for the young children. There are also plenty of activity toys, mirrors and other resources readily available for the babies to play with.

The one to two-year-olds have two playrooms. In one room the toddlers choose to engage in physical play using the ball tent, rocker or trampet. Others opt to engage in imaginary play utilising the play kitchen and resources. Activities are planned in line with the Birth to three matters framework to promote children's all-round development. They, like the babies, have plenty of opportunities to explore and investigate. They enjoy a broad range of creative activities within the second play room. This includes painting and other 'messy play' activities. Children hear background music and enjoy singing and musical activities initiated by the staff. The staff working with the children recognise the importance of talking with the children and using every opportunity to help children to move onto the next stage in their development.

In the two to three year age group children enjoy activities that are planned by their key-carers. The activities promote individual development and engage their interest. Examples of activities include, exploring bubbly water, planting and fruit tasting. The three children at the water trough explore the bubbles rubbing them in their hands with satisfied facial expressions. A child announces "I have bubbles in my bath. I splashed my daddy". This shows the two-year-olds language skills and how she links the activity to her own experience. The child's key-carer asks, "What did he say?" The child replied "that's funny". She laughs. Another child repeats what the other said and all three children erupt with laughter. They continue to scoop the water, fill and empty buckets. They delight in splashing in any water that spills over the edge onto the floor. The children planting are keen to talk about their activity as they collect watering cans in order to water their newly sown seeds. The children in the third group taste fruit as they prepare fruit dipped in chocolate as Mother's Day gifts. They talk with their key-carer about the names of the different fruit and what it tastes like. They manipulate the fruit and with help from the adult dip each piece in turn into chocolate using a cocktail stick. They explore the sticky chocolate, rubbing their hands together to remove it from their palms. They use their fingers to make marks in the chocolate that drips onto the table, concentrating hard as they do so.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and children's learning is good. Children benefit from the key-carers' childcare experience and good understanding of how children learn. Staff have a very good understanding of the Foundation Stage of learning. The staff working with the three and four-year-old children work well together in the delivery of the planned curriculum. A very good range of interesting and enjoyable activities successfully promotes children's development

across all areas of learning. An excellent range of resources is available for use, much of which is stored accessibly for the children. Children tend to limit their choice of activity to those set out by adults for them, despite the good availability of other resources. Staff do not remind children that they can extend planned activities as they wish. The pre-school room is set out to provide areas for creative play, a sensory room, book area, computer stations, areas for table-top and floor activities, and a role-play area. Patio doors lead to an outdoor play space that is routinely incorporated into the learning environment. Children can move between these indoor and outdoor areas. Regular use is made of the wider garden areas. Visitors to the nursery and outings enhance children's enjoyment and learning.

The key-carer system is implemented effectively. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge of where the children are in their learning, their interests and learning styles. This information is used to inform future planning. Individual education plans and additional support are used, when required, to ensure that all children are able to progress well.

Staff facilitate children's language and thinking very well. Children are encouraged to count and problem solve through practical routine activities. Children are familiar with the planned daily routine. This often involves long periods of waiting such as, waiting for all children to wash their hands before snack and meal times. This time is generally used as a time for children to chat to one another and to their key carer. However, some children get restless and time could be used more constructively.

Most of the three and four-year-olds communicate with confidence. They are keen to talk in large and small groups, with both familiar and unfamiliar adults. They talk through what they are doing, make observations, ask questions and share personal experiences with others. Some children are very creative in their story telling. For example, a child starts to recall a holiday experience, beginning with a train ride. The story then moves on to describe his dog falling from the train and his quest to save him. The child vividly describes stretching to reach the dog and finally having to jump from the moving train to rescue the dog and then jump back on. The child uses actions to accompany his story. Children benefit from opportunities to make marks, paint, draw and crayon. They practise drawing lines and circles as they chalk on a large wall-mounted blackboard. They trace over letters formed in dots by adults and complete worksheets designed to practise early writing skills. Writing implements and paper are stored accessibly but children do not regularly use these to 'write' for different purposes undirected. Children join in rhyming songs and stories. A book area is set up with cushions and accessible books that children look at on their own or with their friends. Mostly children listen intently to stories read by adults and will offer suggestions about what book characters are doing, or how they feel.

Children are keen to join in counting, for example, counting the number of children in their groups and the number of different colour cups, at snack time. Number rhymes are sung with gusto and the use of props helps children to understand the concept of subtraction. Children also talk about numbers as they go about their play, such as discussing their different ages. Practical activities are used effectively to introduce children to simple calculations and problem-solving. An example of this is when children count how many, and how many more cups and pieces of fruit are required at snack time. The maths area provides resources that children can sort and compare.

Children like to explore, investigate and experiment. They have opportunities to explore different substances and materials and to explore the garden and local community. They visit the local do-it-yourself store and garden centre to buy seeds which they plant, tend and harvest, gaining

a sense of time as they observe plant growth. They learn about community roles from visitors to the nursery. These include, police and road safety officers, French and Italian speakers, and a vet. Children can regularly choose to use the nursery computers. They manipulate the computer mouse competently and some can successfully complete simple programs. Children construct using their own design ideas. They join together recycled materials or manufactured resources, in a variety of ways.

Children are physically able. They demonstrate the ability to carry out tasks such as, drawing and sorting, with increasing control. They manipulate resource pieces carefully within their fingers and many can negotiate the fastenings on their own clothing and dressing-up clothes. Children mould playdough and plasticene. They shape it with their fingers and use tools to affect change upon it. At the sand tray children dig and transfer the sand into different containers, by means of filling smaller containers, scooping sand in a dustpan or using a traditional spade. This requires careful coordination as the children hold buckets, that become heavier as they are filled, in one hand, whilst scooping sand with tools in their other hands. Children also successfully pour their own drinks.

Children engage in regular art activities mostly on a small scale. They combine different materials and learn different painting techniques. They engage in planned craft activities such as, making Mothers day cards. Such activities tend to be adult-directed. Children do have opportunities to paint freely and craft materials are stored at child level but rarely freely accessed. The three and four-year-olds are imaginative. This is evident through their story telling and role-play activities. They engage in role play based on their first hand experiences, for example, cooking, looking after baby and shopping. They are also keen to take on roles of their favourite superheroes. They use their imaginations as they play with small world animals and link up with others at the sand tray or as they play outdoors. The patio area is often incorporated into children's role play and here they can peg out their 'washing'. Children regularly sing and hear different music. They can relax on cushions in the sensory room to listen to music and enjoy 'discos' when they dance as a group in the darkened room, lit by colourful tube lightening and a rotating glittery disco ball hanging centrally from the ceiling. They explore the sounds of different musical instruments and can use these freely within the sensory room.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children develop very good relationships with their key-carers and other staff. They are all settled and very happy. Most children are very confident and those with less confidence are nurtured by the adults caring for them. They receive good support and encouragement and as a result children share their feelings and will try new things. Children play as individuals, with their friends and enthusiastically join in group activities. Children will often work co-operatively and show care and consideration for others. They show good levels of concentration during activities. They sit together at meal times, story time and during group activities. They sit patiently and learn to take turns and share with others. 'Golden rules' are displayed and children are reminded of the behavioural expectations within the nursery. Good manners are promoted and children's self-esteem is fostered well. Children are encouraged to take pride in their achievements and these are valued by staff. Children receive plenty of meaningful praise and encouragement. Children's independence is promoted. They are encouraged to try things for themselves; they help to serve snacks, pour their drinks and tidy away resources. Children are helped to consider diversity. They see positive images of cultures, ethnicity and disability, in pictorial displays and books. Religious and cultural celebrations are incorporated into planned

activities throughout the year. This gives children an insight into their own and other cultures. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

All children and their parents are warmly welcomed by the friendly staff. This includes children with learning difficulties and disabilities. The special educational needs co-ordinator works with staff, parents and outside professionals to agree individual education plans and to ensure consistency in the support children receive. Adaptations are made to the nursery and activities, to ensure that all children are fully included and are helped to meet their full potential.

Partnership with parents is good. Children's parents speak highly of the staff and the nursery provision. Parents have access to good information about the nursery provision on the nursery website and in their prospectus. Parents are encouraged to visit the setting and share information about their children. The information gathered is then used to aid children's introduction to their nursery group and to inform activity planning, so that children are offered activities that will be of interest to them. Friendly relationships between parents and staff are built up and parents are encouraged to be involved with the nursery. They are routinely invited to social events, many of which are planned outside nursery hours to enable parents to attend. There is an informative parents' notice board and a display of staff photographs in the entrance hall. Here parents can find nursery policies, useful information leaflets and the nursery's complaints procedure. The parents are greeted upon arrival and two-way communication encouraged. Parents evenings are generally well attended and key-carers go through children's progress records. The documented records do not clearly show where children are in their learning but the verbal explanation aids parents understanding. 'Fun sessions', recently introduced, encourage parents to join their children at nursery. Those parents that have done this confirm that it provides an opportunity to observe how their children relate to others at nursery and what activities they do and how they support children's development. Parents receive regular newsletters about what is happening in the nursery and annually questionnaires are sent out in order to get parental feedback about the nursery provision.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The nursery is well organised and the owner's ethos is very much that the provision is child-centred and a fun, enjoyable place for children to play and learn. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The nursery premises are secure, well maintained and attractively decorated. Walls are adorned with photographs of the children at play with clear links to the learning achievements the photographs represent. Children's work is also displayed and each area, including the entrance hall is transformed regularly to reflect current topics and themes. Children's welfare and safety is seen as high priority, however, on occasion safety hazards can go unnoticed. Children's good health is actively promoted. Their physical and emotional needs are met very well. A broad range of activities and experiences are planned for babies and children of all ages. The outdoor garden is well used. Excursions into the local community and visitors invited into nursery, enhance children's learning opportunities. The routines followed for babies and young children are consistent with their home routines. Older children are familiar with the nursery daily routines but can experience long periods of waiting during the course of the day.

The leadership and management of the nursery are good. The managers and staff are passionate about their roles and clear about their responsibilities. They all have good access to training and are committed to their own personal development. The managers compliment one another

with their different expertise and experience. Team spirit is very evident and all adults working within the nursery enjoy their work. The educational programme provides a wide range of experiences to enable children to make good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff know the children very well. They regularly exchange information and discuss individual progress. Records of children's progress are made and verbal explanations given at parents evenings to help parents to understand where their children are in their learning. Key-carers plan the activities for the children in their group. They each have allocated time to do their planning. This ensures that other time is spent working directly with the children and not interrupted by unnecessary organisational tasks. Managers are on hand to monitor the effectiveness of planning, as required. Team meetings are used constructively to reflect upon the nursery's strengths and weaknesses and to identify areas for improvement.

The nursery runs smoothly and all staff are clear about procedures to be followed to ensure the efficient and safe management of the provision and to promote the welfare, care and learning of all children. Documented policies and procedures are readily available for reference and shared with parents. Records are clear, up-to-date and meet requirements of registration.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection two recommendations for improvement were made. In respect of the care aspect of the provision it was recommended that the staff ensure that activities, play opportunities and first-hand experiences in the two to three-year-old age group, allow children to build on their natural curiosity as learners and to use their imaginations. In respect of the provision for nursery education it was recommended that staff provide more opportunities for children to calculate and use numbers throughout the day.

Significant action has been taken in response to the recommendations made. The activities, play opportunities and experiences for two to three-year-olds are very good, with plenty of opportunities for children to develop their imaginations and natural curiosity. The staff working with this age group know the children in their care extremely well and plan following the Birth to three matters framework, helping to build upon what the children already know and can do. Those delivering the Foundation Stage curriculum now confidently introduce children to mathematical ideas and use routine and practical activities to encourage children to use numbers, problem-solve and do simple calculations.

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 action 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.

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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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):

- monitor the effectiveness of risk assessment

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):

- consider how time is used to minimise long periods of waiting for 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