

Thames Valley Park Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY279729
Inspection date	19 February 2008
Inspector	Anne Jeanette Faithfull
Setting Address	Building 4, Microsoft Campus, Thames Valley Park, Reading, Berkshire, RG6 1WG
Telephone number	01189095108
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Registered person	Bright Horizons Family Solutions 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

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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Thames Valley Park Children's Centre is part of the Bright Horizons Family Solutions Ltd. It opened in 2003 and operates from premises on the Microsoft Campus on the Thames Valley Park, Reading, Berkshire. It is situated on the ground floor of one of the Microsoft buildings. There is an enclosed outdoor area. The nursery offers childcare facilities to both employees of Microsoft and families within the local community.

A maximum of 52 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 57 children on roll. This includes 15 funded children. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 07.30 to 18.30 with the exception of Bank Holidays and Christmas.

The nursery employs 12 staff, of these, 10 hold appropriate early years qualifications and two members of staff are working towards achieving these.

The nursery receives support from a mentor/advisor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's physical development is well supported through a wide range of planned activities, which assist in their small and large muscle development. They play outside in the fresh air each day, using a wide range of equipment including large tyres; wheeled toys and they have great fun playing in the outside sandpit. Babies and younger children enjoy using the climbing frame and playing with a range of equipment both indoors and outdoors to develop their hand-and-eye coordination such as using a variety of different sized balls and banging on drums. Children's physical development is further enhanced by a weekly session of 'tots in sports' with a qualified sports instructor.

Children's understanding of the importance of good personal hygiene is good. They are aware to wash their hands after playing outside and before mealtimes. Good procedures are in place for changing nappies as staff wear gloves, aprons and wipe the changing mat after each use. Children have easy, independent access to toilets and sinks; however soiled clothes are stored in the children's toilet area and are not always removed at the end of the day or before the week-end; this does not promote good standards of hygiene. Staff maintain accident and medication records effectively and most have received first aid training, helping to ensure that children are cared for appropriately, if they have an accident or become unwell.

Mealtimes are pleasant social occasions, when children sit together and learn social skills, such as saying 'please' and 'thank you' and older more able children are encouraged to clear away their own plate and cutlery. Children have a wide variety of choice for breakfast which includes a range of cereals and toast. Children's early independence skills are encouraged by staff who encourage them to begin to spread butter and jam on their piece of toast. Children can access a drink when they require from the drinks dispenser situated in the room. The dietary needs of children are discussed with parents and recorded. Each child has their own individual placemat at mealtimes which also records any specific allergies or diet requirements to remind staff and to ensure that children have their needs met appropriately.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a bright and welcoming environment for example; posters, mobiles and displays of children's work are on the walls and hang from the ceilings. Staff organise the areas used by the children well. The baby room has plenty of space for the babies to crawl around and older children particularly enjoy having the space to use large wooden construction blocks to make a lorry which they can sit in. There are sufficient resources to ensure children are comfortable and can play and eat together, developing their social skills and helping them to make choices. Children can reach their toys and equipment easily, this helps to ensure they enjoy a varied range. The babies play with a range of different shakers which they enjoy shaking and banging on the floor, staff are very vigilant in checking to see all the tops on the shakers are secure so the babies cannot access the contents. All toys and resources are checked daily for damage and cleaned on a regular basis by the staff to ensure they remain suitable and safe

for the children to use. Children play in an outdoor area which has a soft play safety surface and is very secure.

There are good systems in place to ensure no unknown adults can enter the nursery such as, an intercom system which allows staff to find out who the person is before opening the door and a security buzzer sounds if the inner door is left open too long. Risk assessments and daily checks carried out by the staff and manager ensure all areas are safe for children before they arrive. Children are beginning to learn how to keep themselves safe as they regularly practise the emergency evacuation procedure and are aware not to run inside the nursery.

Children's welfare is safeguarded by good staff awareness of child protection procedures. All staff receive child protection training, which is reinforced through staff meetings and enables them to act in children's best interests, if concerns arise. Staff have a good understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse and they understand their responsibility to report concerns. This safeguards children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very happy, confident and independent. Staff are caring and gentle making children feel secure and valued. Babies and toddlers enjoy lots of positive interaction with the staff and each other. Staff work well with babies and toddlers to support early communication skills for example, making sounds and singing 'old Macdonald' with them and encouraging the children to join in with the animal noises by showing them puppets of the animals they are singing about. All staff sit at the children's level and talk to children about what they are doing. Children relate well to each other and learn important social skills, such as sharing and being kind. Children enjoy a varied range of activities and experiences both indoors and outdoors which contribute to their learning and all round development. Children are frequently praised for their efforts and achievements by the staff and as a result are motivated to learn and display good levels of self-esteem.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have received Foundation Stage training and work as a team to implement the new planning system in place; this enables them to plan an interesting and varied range of activities and experiences to promote children's learning. However, staff do not yet evaluate the planned activities, to help plan for children's next steps of learning. Staff carry out observations on children and use this information to complete assessment records. Children have the opportunity to participate in group and free flow individual activities throughout the day. On some occasions group time does not meet all the individual learning needs of the children as the age range and ability in the group is very varied. This means some children are given tasks that they are not able to complete owing to their own individual stage of development and learning. Staff plan some activities around a theme, at the time of inspection the theme was the jungle and children enjoyed participating in the 'we are going on a lion hunt' story session and talking about the different animals you may see in the jungle.

Children are growing in confidence in their learning and relationships with each other. For example, they find their own labelled coat pegs, put on their coats and wipe their noses, disposing of tissues safely and help to tidy away resources after use. They readily talk to staff, visitors and each other, about their experiences for example, telling the inspector of their

imaginary trip to the beach and the items and toys they were taking. Children develop their knowledge of number, shape and size as they match, compare, sort and count in daily activities for example, matching and counting various items. They benefit from seeing numbers displayed in the environment in a variety of ways for example on wall displays and on the back of their chairs. Children have some opportunities to practise emergent writing in group time and older more able children are beginning to recognise their name and begin to write their name independently. Children enjoy looking at books in the book area and readily join in the story session predicting what will happen next in the story. Staff extend children's understanding of the story by asking open ended questions for example 'what do you think will happen next'.

Children's knowledge and understanding of their immediate and wider world is promoted by a range of resources and visitors to the nursery including the local police and the effective use of the outdoor area. Children can hunt for mini beasts in the outdoor area and a range of photographs help the children to recognise and identify the mini beasts they find. Children also have the opportunity to grow their own vegetables in the outdoor area. Staff extend children's learning and development when using the outdoor area as they ask them to look up and explain what they can see; children excitedly talk about the blue sky, the birds and the different shapes of the clouds they can see.

Children enjoy a wide and varied range of creative activities, which stimulate their interest and increase their awareness of texture, and use of different resources. For example, children regularly play with dough, sand, water and paint. Children work together to make large displays to cover the walls for example 'what's under the water' where the children made rocks and sharks out of a range of different materials. The nursery has a computer for the children to use, however the children do not have any other access to programmable toys and resources to further develop their understanding of technology. Children enjoy role-play such as pretending they are pirates and making food in the home corner for each other.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children arrive happily, separate from their parent or carer with confidence and quickly select and settle to activities. Staff meet and greet the parents and their children, they are aware of each child's individual needs giving the children a sense of belonging. Babies happily go to the staff when they arrive and enjoy the comforting hug they receive. There are good systems in place to support children who have learning difficulties or disabilities. Close liaison with parents ensures all children's needs are well planned for and met. Children celebrate a variety of different festivals throughout the year, increasing their awareness of the wider world and different lifestyles. This awareness is further supported by visitors to the nursery, such as the police and zoo lab where the children can look at different animals.

Children behave well and learn to respect their environment. They have the opportunity to help devise the nursery rules which are displayed on the wall. Children willingly share the toys, show concern for each other and help to clear away toys. Staff's approach to behaviour management is consistent and realistic. Staff are positive role models for the children and offer frequent, meaningful praise, helping to develop children's self esteem. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents complete all the required documentation including informing the staff of the progress their child has already made at home. This enables staff to build on what children already know as well as providing appropriate care. There are

both formal and informal systems in place for staff and parents to share information about children's individual progress and development. Staff are available each day to talk with parents, and information about nursery procedures, copies of the new planning system and about any other events is readily available in the entrance hall. As the majority of the parents work on the same complex as the nursery is situated in, some parents stay and have breakfast with their children or come at lunchtime to see how they are. Information is also shared with the parents via the secure e-mail system. Parents comment on how happy and settled their children are and how they receive appropriate daily feedback from the staff about their child's day and the progress they have made.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children play in a well-organised and stimulating environment. Staff work directly with the children at all times ensuring good supervision. Children's care is well supported by the calm atmosphere generated by the caring staff. Effective procedures for recruitment and induction ensure that staff are suitable to work with the children. All required documentation is in place, however not all children's times of attendance is accurately recorded and the children's assessment files are not stored in a confidential manner.

Leadership and management of the nursery education are satisfactory. The new manager is implementing some changes to the planning systems and procedures in the nursery to further promote the children's learning and development. She works well with the nursery staff team in place and they are all committed to the on going development of the children and the nursery. The manager's communication skills are good and she keeps staff informed of changes through regular meetings. Staff are supported in their work and ongoing training is actively encouraged, promoting the professional development of all. The manager has the support of the regional operations manager who regularly visits the nursery to offer her on going support and guidance. The annual appraisal system in place identifies any future training needs of the staff and their on going suitability to work in the nursery. The nursery meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the nursery was asked to ensure that the special needs policy is available to parents and to improve existing arrangements for restricting children's independent access to the nursery kitchen. The special needs policy is now available for parents to see and systems are now in place to ensure children cannot access the kitchen area independently. This further ensures the safety of the children attending.

At the last education inspection the nursery was asked: to continue to develop planning procedures to clearly show the learning focus of activities; to make use of opportunities that arise to build on children's problem solving and reinforce children's awareness of numbers as labels and to provide more opportunities for children to build on their phonic awareness by linking sounds and letters. Planning systems now identify the learning focus of the activity offered. Staff now give children the opportunity to begin to problem solve independently and displays around the nursery reinforce children's awareness of numbers as labels. Staff now provide a range of opportunities for children to begin to link sounds to letters. These measures taken further promote children's learning and development.

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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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):

- improve hygiene procedures in the nursery with regard to children's soiled clothing
- ensure all children's actual times of attendance are recorded
- ensure children's files are stored in a confidential manner (this also applies to nursery education)

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):

- continue to develop the planning systems in place, to ensure all planned activities are evaluated to help plan the next step of children's learning
- improve the organisation of group time to ensure children's individual learning needs are met
- increase opportunities for children to access programmable toys and resources to extend their learning of information technology

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