

Playdays

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY336454
Inspection date	07 June 2007
Inspector	Sally Ann Hubbard
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Registered person	Kerry Jane Bloomfield
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 inadequate - notice of action to improve.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Playdays nursery is privately owned. The nursery opened in November 2006 and operates from a purposely refurbished building in Thetford town centre. A maximum of 27 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 17.30. Children have access to a fully enclosed outdoor garden and play area.

There are currently 53 children from three months to five years old on roll. Of these 13 receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from the local area. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties or disabilities, although there are none attending at present. They also support children who have English as an additional language.

The nursery employs nine staff, including the manager, eight of these are appropriately qualified and all have experience of working with children. The nursery receives support from the Support Teacher from Norfolk County Council.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are learning about good personal hygiene and how to keep themselves healthy. They are always encouraged to wash their hands before eating and staff reinforce and explain the importance of good hygiene, for example, explaining to children why they must not eat food off the floor and then further explains that as they have been walking outside they might have germs on their shoes. Children's medical needs are suitably met as staff keep the required medication and accident records. They are trained to administer first aid and also have permission to seek emergency medical advice enabling them to respond appropriately to more serious accidents. The nursery try hard to protect children from illness and infection and implement an appropriate, very clear exclusion policy for sick children, which parents are aware of.

Children are beginning to learn about healthy eating as there is some discussion about healthy food during the morning snack, for example, staff tells children that eating cheese and drinking milk makes their 'bones good and strong'. Children come to have their snack when they are ready and can sit and eat at their own pace, in a relaxed manner with a member of staff. Children who stay at the nursery for lunch have nutritious, balanced meals that are prepared on the premises from fresh ingredients, for example, today the cook has prepared toad in the hole, mashed potatoes and beans and the children all enjoy this. Children particularly enjoy a physical play session in the indoor soft play room and have appropriate opportunities to take part in exercise to help keep them healthy. They are smiling, happy, relaxed and enjoy rolling around the floor with staff and playing with the large soft play shapes. They also thoroughly enjoy making use of the recently completed garden area.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children and their parents are made to feel very welcome at nursery; they are greeted at the door by friendly, chatty staff. An informative display board gives parents information about what is happening at nursery and also there are some examples of children's work displayed here for parents to see. Children each have a labelled peg where they can hang their coats and bags. The premises are made safe and secure for the children, for example, there is a keypad entry on the main entrance door and only staff answer the door. The rooms in the nursery are in good state of repair and appropriately decorated.

The nursery has an appropriate range and variety of resources which cover all areas of learning and are suitable for the ages of the children. These are safe and conform to the relevant safety standards. However although there are sufficient toys and resources these are not all accessible and available to the children. Therefore children use a limited range throughout the day and they are not involved in a variety of activities. Children play safely at nursery because staff take appropriate steps to identify and minimise hazards around the nursery, for example, they have gates in place at the bottom and top of stairs so children cannot access these and high handles on doors throughout the nursery. Children learn how to keep themselves safe as they practise the evacuation procedure; staff are all familiar with procedure and know what to do in an emergency. Clear procedures are in place for outings, appropriate ratios are maintained, and children learn how to keep themselves safe when they are out and about.

Children's welfare is generally safeguarded as all staff have sound knowledge and understanding of child protection. They are clear about the signs and symptoms that would cause them concern. Staff know what to do if they have concerns, they are aware of the procedures to follow and would always put the welfare of children first. The referral information and contact number are readily available in the operational plan and all staff know where this is. A policy detailing the procedures to follow is in place and is readily available. However, they are not able to ensure children are fully safeguarded as there is no information included in the policies detailing the procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against a staff member.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is inadequate.

Whilst the care of the children is satisfactory there are major weaknesses in the nursery education which is reflected in the outcome judgement. Most children are happy and well settled the nursery has appropriate systems for ensuring children settle into nursery well. Children who are still being settled are given comfort and staff are kind and sensitive to their feelings. Children are all developing very positive relationships with staff who are caring and interact well with the children. A varied routine allows for children to be active or to rest as they need to, for example, they have active play indoors or can be quiet and look at books. Children access a satisfactory range of resources over a period of time. They are given lots of personal attention by staff.

The children under two have a range of suitable toys which are within their reach. Most of them also enjoy a session in the soft play room. Children's individual routines are followed with regard to feeding, sleeping and changing which helps them to feel secure. Appropriate information is exchanged with parents in the form of a daily diary detailing what they have done during the day. Staff are beginning to use 'Birth to three matters' to help the development of the younger children. Individual progress folders are being set up ready to use and staff are beginning to keep records.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Not all staff have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage to ensure the plans are effectively implemented. At times staff do some counting or ask children questions or have discussions with children, for example, about healthy eating. However, learning opportunities are frequently missed and children are not sufficiently challenged or extended. A system for planning is in place and although this shows that all areas of learning are covered this is not demonstrated in practice. There is no planning in place for everyday activities, therefore children are often just occupied and not fully involved in purposeful play. Staff are not involved in the planning therefore they cannot implement it effectively to maximise on all learning opportunities.

Staff manage children well and have high expectations for behaviour. They use appropriate management methods, are positive with children giving them frequent praise. Children have a familiar daily routine; however, staff adhere to this with little flexibility to accommodate children's play and learning needs. Staff do not always make effective use of time and resources, for example, the learning environment is not stimulating and inviting as resources are not prepared for the children before they arrive. Displays of children's work make the rooms attractive; however, there are no further displays to support children's learning such as numbers, letters, colours or shapes. Staff know what stage some of the children are at and where they

need to develop, however, assessments are inconsistent and are not effectively used to inform and guide further planning and teaching.

Children's progress in some areas is limited because teaching is not always effective. They are well settled; they separate from their parents happily and are confident with staff. They have some opportunities to develop their independence, such as taking themselves to the toilet when they need to go and pouring their own drinks at snack time. However they are not independently choosing their own activities despite some resources being available in the room. Children have some opportunities to make marks for some of the session. However mark making is not available in everyday play, for example, there is no provision for making marks in the role play area and therefore children do not have sufficient opportunities to learn about writing for a purpose. Children have a book area to use; however, there is a limited range of books available for children to choose and these are not appropriately displayed, therefore children do not make good use of this area. Children are beginning to use language appropriately. They communicate effectively with other children and adults and some of the children talk about their experiences at home. Children enjoy singing rhymes and songs and most join in confidently.

Children do not have sufficient opportunities in mathematical development to solve problems or learn about volume, measuring and weight on a regular basis. Resources to support their learning in this area are not readily available. They have some opportunities to count and use number everyday, for example, children pick two pieces of apple and sing some counting songs and rhymes. Children also have some opportunities to learn about shapes and they can recognise and name simple shapes, such as circle and square.

Children have some opportunities to explore and investigate and use their surroundings, for example, they have the garden area and some resources indoors. They learn about their environment as they go for walks in the town, visit the local museum and library, feed the ducks and have picnics in the park. People come in to talk to the children, such as the dentist to talk about how to keep their teeth healthy. Children have some opportunities to learn about technology, for example, by using programmable toys. They learn about others by looking at some different festivals they celebrate, such as Divali and Chinese New Year. They have space to run and use the larger outdoor equipment to help them develop their physical skills. Indoors they use a variety of resources, for example, using scissors, glue spreaders, dough rollers and cutters and other equipment to help develop their manipulative skills. Children have limited opportunities to explore different media because creative play is not freely available. The role play area is lacking in equipment, and it is not together and set up attractively to encourage children to use the area, for example, the dolls are in one corner and the play kitchen is across the other side of the room. Children do enjoy a whole group painting activity and get well involved in this.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The nursery has a clear, appropriate policy in place for equality of opportunity. Children are all given the same opportunities to be included and involved in the available activities. Staff ask for information about children's individual needs and follow their routines. Some suitable resources and activities help children learn about other cultures, beliefs and our diverse society. Children with English as an additional language are effectively supported and are developing good communication skills. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Although there are currently no children with learning difficulties or disabilities attending appropriate policies and procedures are in place. Staff are aware and can recognise

if children need additional support and help. They would work with parents to provide for children's needs.

Children generally behave well. Staff do give some suitable explanations to help children understand about appropriate behaviour. They provide positive role models and have clear policies in place. Children are given praise and staff are kind and caring. Staff have systems in place for sharing information with parents, these are particularly effective for the very young children and they always verbally tell parents what activities their children have done during the day. Parents know how to make any concerns known, these are addressed in an appropriate way and records are in place of how concerns have been addressed. The nursery staff are developing good relationships with parents who give positive comments about the staff team.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is satisfactory. Parents are given an informative brochure giving practical details about the nursery and how it operates. This brochure includes some information about the Foundation Stage and what their children will be learning. Parents are given information about the topics that will be covered and can be involved in their children's learning, for example, by bringing in items related to the topics. Parents can ask to see children's progress records if they wish to, although these are currently being compiled and are not ready to be shared with parents yet. Staff exchange information verbally about children's progress to keep parents informed.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

Whilst the nursery effectively monitor the organisation of care the monitoring and assessment of nursery education is inadequate which is reflected in the outcome judgement. Children's welfare is appropriately protected as the nursery has good systems in place for checking staff to ensure they are suitable to work with children. Recruitment and vetting procedures are in place; these are thorough to ensure staff are suitable. The proprietor, who also manages the nursery, is appropriately qualified and all but one member of staff also hold relevant qualifications. All of the staff have experience of working in a day care setting.

Sufficient staff are available to meet the required ratios and the staff work well together as a team. However as staff move around the nursery and work in different rooms every day children do not have consistent staff and continuity of care. Despite this most children are well settled, however, space and resources are not well organised to provide sufficient toys and activities for all the children throughout the day. All of the records that are required for the safe management of the nursery are in place. These are all accessible and readily available if needed. An accurate register is maintained and details of emergency contacts for staff and children are all quickly accessible if needed in an emergency. Records are also kept securely so as to maintain confidentiality. Overall children's needs are met.

The leadership and management is inadequate because the manager of the setting has insufficient understanding and involvement in the delivery of the Foundation Stage. Although she completes the planning she is not involved in working directly with the children, therefore others have to implement the plans she has written. This is not always effective for the children's learning. Staff work well together and have good relationships with each other and the manager, this means that overall the nursery is a happy place. Staff have clearly identified roles, however, as these change from day to day it is difficult to maintain continuity and consistency in each room which impacts on the effectiveness of children's learning.

The manager has identified some areas for improvement and is beginning to find ways of addressing these. Some monitoring of staff takes place through general observations, however there is no system for formal appraisal in place, therefore monitoring of staff is not yet fully effective. Staff have discussions and do some evaluation of the plans, however this is limited and the lack of consistent staff for the funded children makes it difficult for effective monitoring to take place. The proprietor is aware of the areas for development and is very willing to make changes and improvements to the care and education they provide.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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

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 inadequate - notice of action to improve.

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):

- provide children with sufficient stimulating activities and play opportunities in all areas of play learning and development
- ensure the child protection policy includes the procedures to be followed in the event of allegation of abuse being made against a member of staff
- ensure that deployment of staff allows children to belong to a key group which has consistent staff.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- ensure staff have secure knowledge of and can effectively implement the Foundation Stage. Provide children with sufficient challenge

- ensure assessments of children's progress are used to identify their next steps for learning and that these next steps are incorporated into the future planning. Ensure these records are available for parents
- ensure the learning environment is well planned and organised and that staff are effectively deployed to enable children to have rich and stimulating experiences.

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

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