

Playdays

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY336454
Inspection date	12 December 2007
Inspector	Andrea Caroline Snowden
Setting Address	Theatre House, White Hart Street, Thetford, Norfolk, IP24 1AD
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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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Playdays nursery is privately owned. It opened in 2006 and operates from a purposely refurbished building in the town centre of Thetford, Norfolk. A maximum of 33 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 51 children aged from three months to under five years old on roll. Of these, 11 receive funding for early education. The nursery is able to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery proprietor/manager is suitably qualified and experienced, and employs a team of 10 members of staff. Of these, nine are childcare staff and eight hold relevant childcare qualifications. A cook is also employed.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean, appropriately maintained environment. They are beginning to learn the importance of personal hygiene as they fetch their tissues when asked to do so and dispose of them hygienically. Older children wash their hands routinely after using the bathroom, but there is no positive reinforcement of this from posters or discussion from staff. For a short period of time when the paper towels run out, children use a communal towel which has the potential to spread germs. There are some effective policies and procedures in place to maintain children's good health and welfare, for example, the wearing of disposable gloves when dealing with bodily fluids. Additionally, the nursery has worked hard with parents to try to reduce the risk of infection from children who have contagious illnesses. The staff are trained to administer first aid and parents have given their written permission to enable them to seek emergency medical treatment. Information is sought from parents prior to care commencing to ensure staff can appropriately meet children's health needs.

The setting takes positive steps to promote healthy eating. Children are offered a wide range of fresh fruits at snack times such as melon, banana, and sliced apple. The older children pour their own drinks from small jugs, helping to promote their independence. Small babies are fed by key staff who cuddle them close, maintaining eye contact, helping babies feel secure. At meal times all the children sit together, creating a social occasion. Babies who are beginning to feed themselves are given appropriate support in order to develop their skills, whilst older children help collect the dirty aprons and tidy away. The nursery provides children with very good quality hot dinners which incorporate fresh vegetables and the minimum amount of processed foods. Children really enjoy the toad-in-the-hole with fresh brussels sprouts and cabbage and many ask for second helpings. The nursery has good systems in place to ensure children with allergies are given appropriate foods and menus are displayed for parents information. Staff help children learn a little about healthy eating as they discuss where the vegetables have come from and older children are able to help staff prepare the tea.

Children have very regular access to fresh air and exercise, using the spacious garden. They are, therefore, beginning to learn about developing a healthy, active lifestyle. Children recognise the effect of exercise on their bodies and can feel their heart beating when they place their hands on their chest after running. Children comment that they are using their muscles, for example, when rolling out salt dough. The nursery organises visitors such as the dentist to help children learn about caring for their bodies in a fun and meaningful way.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

All children receive a warm welcome from the staff and come into the setting happily. Displays of children's photographs on notice boards creates a welcoming child-centred environment in the entrance hall and the colourful, bright playrooms help children feel secure in their nursery. The setting is appropriately maintained and generally clean and as a result, children are able to explore in relative safety. The layout of the rooms mean that older children are able to choose from different areas in which to play, whilst toddlers use a room upstairs which is closely monitored by the staff to ensure all areas are used effectively. Babies benefit from a cosy room which provides them with space to sleep peacefully and a secure area to play.

Children have free access to a suitable range of clean and well maintained resources, which they are encouraged to respect. They select from toys, at will, which are contained in boxes labelled with words and pictures to encourage independence in all children. When they have finished playing children are encouraged to tidy away to promote respect for the toys and to maintain a safe environment. Older children demonstrate a clear understanding of how to use equipment safely. They talk about being careful with their scissors because 'they will hurt you' and know that they must not touch the large scissors, saying that 'they are the ladies'. Toys in the baby room are frequently sterilised to ensure infection does not spread amongst them. Risk assessments are carried out to ensure the children play and learn in safety, however, there are some hazards on the premises which have the potential to cause children harm. A plug socket is not protected, sheets of Perspex have been left in the garden and the lawn mower, although, covered in polythene sheeting, is left in the garden.

Children are protected from the risk of possible harm from abuse. Staff ensure that children are never left alone with persons who have not been vetted. Furthermore, children are not allowed to leave the nursery with any other adult unless parents have given their permission. Staff have received training in order to safeguard children and as a result, can demonstrate that they are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of child abuse and put procedures in place. The nursery has further considered children's safety by developing procedures to follow in case children become lost or are not collected by their parents at the end of the day.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are developing positive relationships with the staff and their peers. There is a genuine closeness with staff in the baby room and the babies enjoy snuggling cuddles, affectionate kisses on the cheek and a bond which helps them develop confidence. They communicate with the staff by squealing and babbling and respond to staff's facial gestures and body language with obvious pleasure. They show delight as staff sing to them, encourage them in action songs and help them build towers of bricks. They look at board books together, bouncing up and down on their bottoms as they look at the pictures and enjoy looking at their reflections in the mirror as they become familiar with themselves. Babies are supported in becoming mobile. Staff place toys just out of reach so that they have to move to reach an activity, they pull themselves up and walk around the furniture and staff help them to bear weight on their legs by walking with them.

Toddlers also enjoy a close relationship to their caring staff. Staff plan a variety of activities and use assessments well to ensure that these children are making progress in their development. Activities are offered to encourage children to take part and they enjoy painting on paper on the floor and playing musical instruments as they sing. They count easily when in a group and children sing spontaneously as they play, indicating that they are content and happy. Children enjoy icing and decorating cakes, some returning again and again to the activity. However, some activities are limited rather than extended. For example, staff ask children not to play with the cars in the sand and as a result, children's ideas are curtailed. Additionally, some craft activities in the toddlers room and the pre-school room are too adult led. Children are told where to place the various items, where to cut the ribbon and given a limited choice of coloured paper and ribbon to create their Christmas crackers. In the toddler room, all toddlers produce a Christmas stocking which looks identical to the next. As a result of the staff structuring some craft activities too tightly, children are not able to build on their own curiosity, follow through their own ideas and use their imagination fully. When children are allowed to explore and be creative, for example, when making a picture of Father Christmas, they draw, cut shapes

free-hand, glue and use a wide variety of glitter and sparkles to create beautiful, individual pictures which reflect their own ideas and imagination.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff show a reasonable understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and are able to follow the plans which are devised by the nursery manager. However, their skills are not yet developed enough to ensure that children get the most from every activity presented to them and some opportunities to reinforce children's learning through their normal daily routines and the continuous provision are lost. There are some good teaching methods used to support children but staff do not ask many open-ended questions in order to promote children's thinking and problem solving skills. Staff do build easy relationships with the children and as a result, children are eager to take part in activities and appear to enjoy what they do. Staff work directly with the children for the majority of the time and have created an environment where children can be, and are, self-sufficient. The outdoor environment is not effectively planned and although children enjoy the garden every day they do not always use the play resources available, nor take part in planned activities to challenge their physical development. The managers curriculum planning gives staff enough information to ensure that particular activities are adapted to meet the needs of more or less able children and supports staff by listing what the learning objective is and what language they should use with children to help promote the objectives. Staff make observations of children's learning and are able to use these to plan the next steps for learning to ensure they make some satisfactory progress. Written assessments do not always identify the learning a child has achieved, again highlighting a weakness in the knowledge and understanding of staff of the curriculum.

Children separate from their parents and carers with ease and are keen to become engaged in the activities offered. They generally play co-operatively together and are able to share and take turns. They manage personal tasks for themselves such as changing their shoes or fastening the buttons on their cardigans. Older children are beginning to form letters as they pen over dots and label their displays, but there are limited mark-making materials generally available to promote skills in this area. Children engage in hand-eye co-ordination activities through puzzles and join-in rhymes and songs. Their language skills are enhanced as they manage to speak complex words, for example, when talking about the crescent moon or singing the song 'Skinner-Marinkey-Do'. Children do not readily access the book corner, nor are there enough opportunities for them to link sounds to letters. Children do use mathematical language in their every day activities. They describe a piece of paper as massive and declare that they need tiny eyes for the angel models. When children cut a shape in the paper which is a rectangle, staff check to see if they can name it. They match and sort by colour and shape, helping to develop early mathematical skills.

Children are becoming aware of the world around them. They notice changes as they occur, for example, when ice melts into water or the chocolate melts when making cakes. They design and make models from construction kits and have some opportunities to explore in some of their activities. Children do not have sufficient opportunities to become familiar with information, communication technology. Children's imagination is fostered through role play and small world activities where they make up their own stories based on their experiences. They sing with enthusiasm and enjoy using the instruments to tap out a rhythm. They use media and paint using different methods to create different pictures. Children use the garden daily and enjoy running up and down in races with staff. Few children use the other resources such as the slide and swing and as a result, children's large muscle skills are not sufficiently challenged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Following changes made in the nursery children are now cared for by staff who are well known to them. This continuity of care ensures that staff also know the children well and therefore are able to meet individual needs more effectively. Staff in the baby room ensure that they seek information about babies' routines and parental preferences for sleep and feeds and ensure that each child is able to follow their own individual routine. The manager of the setting makes an initial assessment of each child on registration to try to ensure they are settled into nursery effectively and that changes are made to ensure their individual needs are met. Children are developing an understanding of the wider society because the setting introduces them to some resources and activities which promote discussion about different cultures, religions and abilities. Children have celebrated festivals from around the world such as Chinese New Year.

The nursery is suitably prepared to accommodate those having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Although, they are not currently caring for children with learning difficulties or disabilities, staff are able to recognise possible developmental delay and there are appropriate procedures in place to guide them if children appear not to be making progress. They are able to work with parents, carers and other agencies to provide appropriate care and learning and can access support from the area co-ordinator to develop individual educational plans so that children of all abilities can reach their full potential.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They behave considerately to one another and are learning to share resources. A reward chart system is in place to encourage positive and thoughtful behaviour. Children are generally helped by staff to learn right from wrong. Staff explain the consequences of children's actions to help them understand more clearly. Table manners are encouraged and children sing a song before meals to remind them of this and that it is nice to be polite. Children's self-esteem is generally enhanced as staff praise children. Some staff's handling of children is not always appropriate nor takes into account the level of understanding of very young children; as a result, children's welfare and development is not always promoted effectively.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents are warmly welcomed into the nursery and provided with a brochure explaining useful information and policies which enable them to understand how the setting works. When parents drop off or collect their children they wait in the hallway and rarely see the nursery playrooms in action. There is a good verbal exchange of information as parents drop off and collect their children to ensure that everyone remains informed about the child's welfare, development and achievements. Parents are pleased with the progress their children are making and describe staff as approachable and friendly. However, they are less informed about the early education curriculum that is provided for their children and have insufficient access to their children's 'learning stories'. As a result, they are less able to be involved with their child's learning at home nor able to work with staff to plan the next steps for children's learning.

Parents of younger children enjoy positive relationships with the staff. Parents are encouraged to stay with their children to settle them in and as a result, children build confidence in the setting whilst their parents are still present. Staff ensure a written sheet is sent home with very young children indicating how they have eaten and slept and occasionally are able to include information about what activities they have been doing. There are photographs in the entrance hall and displays of children's art work so that parents can see the type of activities which go

on at the nursery. Parents are informed of how to raise concerns through the nursery's complaints procedure and there is a good system in place to investigate any issues raised.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's care and learning is supported by a team of enthusiastic staff who are committed to improving the quality of care and education for children. The recruitment procedures ensure that staff are suitable to work with children and an appropriate induction programme ensures staff are acquainted with the nursery routines. The organisation of the nursery is effective in supporting children and staff deployment is carefully planned to ensure ratios are adhered to and children are cared for properly. The required documentation is in place and maintained to an acceptable standard. The accurate record of attendance ensures that staff always know who is present in order to support children's welfare and care further.

The leadership and management is satisfactory. There are some informal systems in place to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the nursery through regular room meetings, reviews and gathering verbal feedback from parents. The manager also uses these strategies to monitor the quality of the nursery education in the setting. She is working from an action plan to make changes to enhance the learning opportunities for children and is pro-active when following guidance or advice. Her expectations of staff are realistic in that she expects them to 'improve their practice to offer the best for every child' and staff are just beginning to have the opportunity through verbal appraisal to reflect on their practice and think about their future development. They are given time to complete training in order to refresh their knowledge and skills.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the nursery manager was asked to address the following: to provide children with sufficient stimulating activities and play opportunities in all areas of play, learning and development; to ensure the child protection policy was updated with procedures to be followed if an allegation was made against staff; to ensure that deployment of staff allowed children to belong to a key group of consistent staff; to ensure staff's knowledge and understanding enabled them to implement the curriculum effectively; to ensure assessments were used to identify children's next steps for learning; to ensure that records are available for parents and to ensure that the environment is well planned and organised.

Since the last inspection the nursery manager has made some significant changes which have brought about improvements for children. By relocating the pre-school children downstairs she has ensured that they now access a range of activities and play opportunities and exercise freedom of choice. Staff deployment has been reorganised to ensure that each room has consistent staff and therefore, children belong to a key group, developing and improving relationships further. The child protection policy has been updated in order that correct procedures may be followed in order to protect children.

Staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum is still developing, and training opportunities have been set up to enhance this further. Assessments are being used to identify the next steps for learning and these are included in future planning. However,

these assessments are not yet readily available to parents. The environment is better organised and planned in order to provide children with improved opportunities.

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

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.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure the potential hazards and risk of cross-infection to children are minimised
- ensure staff promote children's independence appropriately by giving them opportunities to build on their natural curiosity as learners and developing and maintaining high expectations of children
- ensure all adults handling of children's behaviour is consistent and developmentally appropriate, respecting the individual child's level of understanding and maturity.

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):

- further improve staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum, so that opportunities are not lost to promote children's learning during planned activities and their everyday routines
- ensure curriculum planning offers children the opportunity to access activities from across the whole curriculum and that the outdoor environment is planned more effectively
- further improve the partnership with parents so that there is clear information about the curriculum children are following and that parents have better access to their children's developmental files.

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