



## **Puddleducks Day Nursery**

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY303073
<b>Inspection date</b>	27 July 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Julie Ann Birkett
<b>Setting Address</b>	Cannock Grange Day Centre, 105 Old Heath Road, Colchester, Essex, CO1 2EX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01206 790174
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Puddleducks Child Care Ltd
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

Puddleducks Day Nursery is one of four nurseries run by Puddleducks Child Care Ltd. It opened in 2005 and operates from three rooms in a converted and extended barn. It is situated in the centre of Colchester. A maximum of 50 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 52 weeks of the year. All children share access to secure enclosed outdoor play areas.

There are currently 52 children aged from birth to under five years on roll. Of these 22 receive funding for early education. Children come from both the local and wider catchment area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The nursery employs 12 staff, nine of these, including the manager hold appropriate qualifications. One member of staff is working towards a qualification.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from being cared for in an environment where appropriate hygiene practices are maintained by staff. For example, staff wear disposable gloves and aprons when changing nappies and tables are cleaned with anti-bacterial cleanser to help prevent cross-infection. Children learn about hygiene and personal care through daily routines such as, putting their hands over their mouths when they cough and wiping their noses. Younger children are helped to wash their hands before meals and the older children do this independently.

Children have their dietary needs met because the staff request information from parents and carers about the children's dietary requirements and allergies. Menus are displayed for parents and carers to see and the younger children's daily record cards show parents and carers what their child has eaten. Meal times are social occasions with staff and children sitting together. The younger children are encouraged to feed themselves while the older children's independence is fostered when they serve themselves. Freshly prepared, nutritious meals are cooked on the premises. Children are provided with healthy choices at snack and meal times and enjoy fresh fruit and vegetables at every meal. Children are encouraged to try new foods when they take part in food tasting sessions and enjoy foods from around the world.

Children participate in a range of indoor and outdoor activities which contribute to their physical development and fitness. For example, children develop their large motor skills and co-ordination as they run, climb and use bikes in the garden. Children have a good understanding of why they need to wear their hats and apply sun cream when preparing to go outside in the hot weather. Inside, the children enjoy ring games and using the parachute to crawl under. The very youngest children develop their skills as they crawl around the floor and pull themselves up on furniture and staff knees. Children are provided with lots of healthy living opportunities but they are not always encouraged to learn why these are an important part of their lifestyle. For example through displays, games and conversation with staff.

Children's good health is promoted because the staff are well informed about the children's health care matters and all necessary consents are in place to support this. Children receive appropriate care if they are ill because there are procedures in place to prevent the spread of infection. There are a number of staff who are first aid trained to ensure they can respond appropriately in the event of an emergency.

Children's emotional well-being is fostered through the good quality interaction from staff. For example, cuddles are freely given and the babies enjoy snuggling into a member of staff to share a book.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. Security measures are robust and implemented well. Children's safety is promoted through the vigilance of the management team who carry out regular and thorough risk assessments of the premises. All staff make daily checks of the premises to ensure the children's safety is maintained. The premises are maintained to a satisfactory standard. Parents, carers and children are warmly welcomed into the nursery by staff. The premises are made welcoming overall through displays, notice boards and flower tubs in the entrance garden.

Children use suitable and safe toys that are checked regularly for damage and cleanliness. The range of toys and resources available for the two to five year old children is adequate to provide suitable play opportunities for the children in all areas of play, learning and development. However, this range is not extensive, particularly with regard to role play.

Children's awareness of everyday safety is reinforced effectively when they are reminded to walk inside and the best way to climb the slide. Children understand that things have to be picked up off the floor to prevent tripping and that spilt sand and water can cause them to slip. Children enjoy using the climbing equipment on the safety surface. This enables children to practise and extend their skills in safety while under the watchful eye of staff. Children and staff regularly practise evacuation procedures and know what to do in the event of an emergency.

Children are well supervised by staff at all times which contributes to their safety. Staff implement the appropriate safety procedures and documentation is well maintained to ensure the children's safety is promoted. Children are safeguarded because staff are aware of their child protection responsibilities and give top priority to children's welfare.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the nursery and settle quickly to the day's activities and routines. The staff and children laugh a lot together in their interactions. For example, a toddler, sitting on a member of staff's lap, giggles loudly as they fire water from a water pistol out of the window at the older children. Good relationships are developed between staff and children because staff are warm and caring and evidently enjoy being with the children.

Children are developing confidence and good self-esteem because they are given

choices about what they can do. This is because staff organise space and resources in the under three's rooms well to encourage children to investigate things for themselves. Children are secure in the environment and the daily routines and are confident to make decisions about their day. For example, a two year old decided after her dinner that she did not want her desert and said "I'm tired now and am going to sleep". She took herself off to her bed, took off her shoes and went to sleep without any fuss or undue intervention from staff.

Children become very engrossed in their play and learning because they initiate a lot of play for themselves. For example, after a planned group activity they are encouraged to choose toys from the low level storage units. Children use their imaginations when they play with the farm animals and make the animal noises. They tenderly feed the dolls with bottles and beakers and sit them on the potties. Children are encouraged in their play and learning because staff listen and spend time working directly with the children. For example, children explore paint with their hands as the member of staff, nestled amongst them, talks about what they are doing.

Children are making good progress in their development. For example, children's language is encouraged when they babble and sing along to familiar songs and action rhymes. Staff introduce new words to babies when they explore. For example, a baby grasping an adult's plastic apron is told "listen, it makes a scrunchy, crackly sound". Children enjoy sharing books with adults and learning through the pictures and words they see and hear. Children express their ideas when they paint, use drawing materials and make models. Children's understanding of what they see around them is developed because staff talk to them about what they see, hear and feel. Children enjoy lots of sensory experiences such as, sand, water and jelly play. They have opportunities to investigate 'treasure baskets' full of interesting natural items such as, pine cones, wooden spoons and fabric. They make and compare sounds as they shake plastic bottles full of different things.

Staff make regular and informative observations of what the children do and keep assessment records to track the children's progress to help them plan for the children's next steps. Staff plan a range of activities to interest the children and help them make progress in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Some staff have already attended training on this framework and others are booked on an imminent course. All these measures are effective in helping the children make good progress.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Overall, staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and benefit from the support of other experienced staff working within the nursery chain. Long term plans show how the curriculum will cover the stepping stones of learning over a period of time. These are used consistently throughout the chain as a guideline for all staff. Staff at this nursery, make weekly and focussed activity plans which show how and what the children will learn across the six areas of learning. Children have opportunities to learn both inside and outside. For example, they practise their writing skills inside at the table and outside on the mats. Staff plan some activities for outside play, but this

is not consistent and does not use the full potential of the easily accessible garden as an 'outdoor classroom'.

Children have opportunities to consolidate their learning through familiar and favourite activities. However, there is a lot of repetition in the resources provided which does not always stimulate and motivate the children to use and learn from them. Children are able to select from a range of activities and resources set up for them by the staff which promotes their decision making skills. There are limited opportunities for children to access play equipment independently to enable them to support their own ideas and play.

Staff support children in their play and learning, particularly in small group work. All staff are interested in what the children say and do and use positive methods to promote the children's good behaviour. Staff make observations of the children at play and these contribute to the children's record of progress and the planning of the children's next steps. Despite this, some activities lack suitable challenge for the more able children to further extend their skills and knowledge.

Children are happy and settled at the nursery and have a good understanding of everyday routines. They are able to follow these routines through pictures on a low level display board so that they know what will happen next. Children behave well and learn to share and take turns. They are overall, independent in their self-care and carry out tasks such as, hand washing and pouring drinks with little adult help. Children are developing in confidence because they are supported and praised by staff for their efforts. For example, a child was reluctant to write his own name but with encouragement from staff did this well and was very proud of his achievement.

Children talk eagerly to their friends and staff about their family, friends and special events. For example, over lunch the children talk about train journeys and the seaside. Children enjoy listening to stories and eagerly join in with the remembered lines and sounds. Children also enjoy looking at books by themselves in the book area. Children are learning to recognise their names and the letters in them when they put their name cards on the board. They learn letter sounds when they play matching games. Children develop their mark making skills through everyday opportunities and some of the more able children can write their own names. Children have limited opportunities to look at text in their environment to encourage their understanding of the written word and letter recognition and formation.

Children count in their everyday play and use their fingers to represent numbers. For example, when talking about how many computers they have at home. They are beginning to recognise numbers that are significant to them. For example, they can pick out their age from the number line on the table. They are able to count how many pictures they have on a card and talk about having more than their friends. Staff do not always encourage children to develop these problem solving skills through everyday practical experiences. Children learn about measurement when they compare volume and capacity in the water and talk about big and small jumps.

Children use the computer well and use other electronic toys such as, a play till. They have access to simple science equipment such as, magnifying glasses, water wheels and sand timers. However, children, particularly the more able, are not actively

encouraged to think about how things work to further promote their investigative skills. Children learn about the natural world when they talk about changes in the weather and life cycles. They look at how water is hard in the rubber glove when it is frozen but how floppy the glove becomes when the water has melted. They design and make models from recycled items and construction toys.

Children enjoy using their physical skills and develop their co-ordination as they jump between the large soft play toys in the garden. They have opportunities to climb and balance on the climbing frame and beams. Children's fine motor skills are promoted when they use paint brushes, pencils and pour their own drinks.

Children express their individual creativity when they paint, draw and make collages and models. They use their imaginations when they use small world equipment such as, animals and cars and the garage. They have opportunities to take part in role play and dressing-up and make cars using old steering wheels as props. Some planned role play opportunities are not well prepared for the children. For example, the vegetable shop was poorly resourced and did not encourage the children to use their imaginations by playing in it. The children have some planned opportunities to take part in music making sessions.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared by staff who work with parents and carers to meet the individual children's needs and ensure that they are included in the life of the setting. There is a nursery prospectus and policies and procedures are made available to parents and carers so that they are informed about the working practices. Parents and carers complete an initial profile of their child to enable staff to understand the children's likes and dislikes, routines and their developmental starting points. Parents and carers are made aware of what their children have been doing in the nursery through a range of displays throughout the setting. Daily diary books for children under two years record the child's routines and what they have enjoyed that day. This enables parents and carers have a view of their child's day. The children's progress records are sent home regularly to enable parents and carers to make a contribution to these records from their observations of their child at home.

Children have a sense of belonging to the nursery. They see their artwork on the walls and have named pegs for their own belongings. However, many of the displays in the rooms are not at child level or very interactive to further promote the children's sense of being able to contribute to their surroundings and feeling a part of them.

Children's behaviour is good overall and they have an understanding of the boundaries of behaviour and are developing a sense of right and wrong. Children are developing good manners and social skills. For example, a child politely asks a visitor "would you like to come and play with us". All staff manage children's behaviour appropriately and give clear, age appropriate explanations to help the children develop self-control. Children receive lots of praise and encouragement from the staff which promotes their self-esteem and confidence.

There is an ethos of inclusion in the nursery and staff show respect for all children's similarities and differences. Children develop respect for others and their environment. For example, they learn to share and take turns and to tidy up after they play. They learn about the wider world through planned topics about different festivals and by playing with play equipment such as dolls, puzzles and books that portray positive multicultural images. There are limited positive images that reflect non-stereotypical roles, racial, cultural and religious diversity and disability to develop children's awareness of our similarities and differences.

Appropriate systems are in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff have attended appropriate training in this area and are aware of how they can seek further support and advice from other agencies.

Partnership with parents and carers of nursery funded children is satisfactory. Parents and carers have access to the weekly curriculum planning displayed in the nursery room so that they are able to support the children's learning at home. There are systems in place to share the children's assessment records with the parents and carers to ensure that they are informed about their child's progress. Staff talk daily with parents and carers.

The nursery fosters the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children's development and welfare are promoted because staff work as a team and understand their roles and responsibilities. Children are protected because staff checks have been undertaken to ensure that adults working with the children are suitable to do so. This is because there are good recruitment and induction procedures in place. There is a staff appraisal system in place to ensure that the professional development needs of the staff are monitored and identified. This ensures the quality of care and learning in the nursery meets the children's needs.

There is a good ratio of qualified staff and all staff are committed to ongoing training to further develop their skills and knowledge. The nursery manager has worked with her team of staff in developing an evaluation of their own working practice. From this a comprehensive action plan for improvements in the nursery has been developed. This demonstrates a positive attitude and commitment to improving the welfare and development of all the children.

Organisation of time and space promotes the children's development overall. The daily routine enables children to have time for free play, choosing from a selection of activities and experiences that staff plan. Children also work in small and large groups throughout the sessions on more adult-led, focussed activities. Children, particularly the very youngest, benefit from the key worker system developed to establish secure bonds with familiar adults.

Paperwork and documentation is in very good order and promotes the children's safety and welfare. The comprehensive policies and procedures are reviewed and



updated, if necessary, to ensure that they are still meaningful in working practice.

Leadership and management of the nursery funded children is satisfactory. There are regular staff and planning meetings to discuss the funded education programme. Staff have identified their strengths and weaknesses and have developed their own action plan for improvement. All these measures contribute to the children making satisfactory progress.

Overall, the needs of the range of children attending are met.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the setting were asked to ensure that there is sufficient equipment, including toys and play materials, to support the needs of all children attending. They were also asked to improve organisation to make full use of all parts of the premises, including outdoor space, to improve play and learning opportunities for children.

Children have benefited from a range of new equipment and toys which have been purchased, collected and made by staff. This still remains an area for continual improvement, as outlined previously in this report. The use of space has been reviewed and rooms have been changed around to make more effective use of them. The children enjoy playing in the outside areas where they have access to a range of toys and resources to promote their development. These measures have ensured that the quality of care is of a satisfactory, and in some aspects, good standard.

### **Nursery Education**

At the last inspection, the quality of nursery education was judged as inadequate. The setting was required to improve the staff's knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum to enable them to plan and provide a range of activities that challenge children and extend their learning. They were also required to make good use of the time and resources available. They were also required to review the assessment system to ensure it clearly shows children's progress and indicates the next steps in children's learning and can be shared with parents.

There have been significant changes to the management team and the staff working with the nursery funded children since the last inspection. The key staff working in the nursery class are both qualified to level three and have a sound understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Stage curriculum. One member of staff who has less experience with this age range is working with the more experienced member of staff to develop her skills in the implementation of the learning programme. There is a new system of planning being used and overall. This is much improved to ensure the six areas of learning are covered through a range of activities. However, as previously outlined in this report, staff do not consistently take advantage of opportunities to further extend and challenge the more able children in their learning and this continues to be an area for improvement.

Since the last inspection, the staff have re-organised all the rooms in the nursery to enable them to make best use of the space, time and resources. The nursery funded children now have different areas for different types of activities and now have a more interesting environment to play and work in.

Records which track the children's progress towards the early goals are in place and are up to date and show what the next stepping stones are. The staff are beginning to use these to help them plan for the children's next steps. Parents and carers make contributions to the children's assessment records as previously outlined in this report. All these measures have ensured that the quality of nursery education is now of a satisfactory standard.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

There have been two complaints since the last inspection. Ofsted received a concern regarding the staff to child ratios. An Ofsted childcare inspector conducted an unannounced visit on 26 April 2006 to investigate the concern in relation to National Standard 2 'Organisation'. As a result of the investigation the provider was given two actions under National Standard 2. A satisfactory response to these actions was received on 09 May 2006.

Ofsted received concerns regarding inadequate sun protection, lack of shade in the outside play area and food and drink. A childcare inspector conducted a visit to the provision on 26 July 2006 to inspect in relation to National Standards 3 'Care, Learning and Play', 6 'Safety', 8 'Food and Drink' and 12 'Working in partnership with parents and carers'. There was no evidence at the time of the visit to suggest that National Standards were not being met and Ofsted took no further action.

The provider remains qualified for registration.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

## **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION**

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 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):

- make further use of everyday routines and opportunities to promote children's understanding of the importance of healthy living
- continue to develop the range of toys and resources for the two to five year olds, particularly with regard to role play equipment, to further promote their development and learning in all areas of play
- make the premises more welcoming and interesting for the children to further promote their sense of belonging to the group for example, through more low level interactive displays, and to develop their understanding of diversity and the wider world

### **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 improve planning to ensure that children are provided with a broad and varied range of activities and experiences across all areas of their learning, both indoors and outside, which motivate and challenge them
- review the organisation of equipment and resources to enable children to access more of these for themselves to help them develop their own ideas, play and learning
- make more effective use of the outdoor space so that children can learn across all the areas by working on a larger, more creative scale than is possible indoors to help them develop and reinforce their learning.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)