



## Footprints

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY305659
<b>Inspection date</b>	03 March 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Mary Van De Peer
<b>Setting Address</b>	'Imagine', Millbank Road, Kingsnorth, Ashford, Kent, TN23 3JD
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<b>Registered person</b>	Ashford Play Centre 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 inadequate - notice of action to improve.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Footprints Nursery opened in 2005 and operates from several rooms in a purpose-built play centre. It is located in Ashford, Kent. A maximum of 54 children may attend the nursery at any one time. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 until 18:00 all year round. There is currently no outdoor play area. However, an adjoining indoor activity centre is

available.

There are currently 21 children aged up to 8 years on roll. Of these, 6 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and some who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs five staff. There are three staff, including the manager and deputy who hold appropriate early years qualifications. There is one other member of staff working towards a qualification. They also receive support from the Local Authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are learning the importance of maintaining personal hygiene through appropriate routines. They wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating their snack. The children are protected from infection as the nursery staff are kept informed about children's health care matters. The required record keeping procedures are in place. The information regarding medication administration are especially effective. Although, accident records are quite complicated. Most staff hold first aid certificates which are kept updated. This means that staff can respond appropriately to children's minor injuries. Children are not able to choose for themselves when they want a drink and something to eat, however staff provide them with healthy choices, such as fruit and vegetables at snack times.

The staff provide several activities to help further develop children's fine motor skills. They are competent when able to select and use small equipment such as scissors, glue sticks and paintbrushes. There is no designated outdoor area available for children. This means that they do not benefit from the opportunities provided by being able to go outside in the fresh air. Nonetheless, children are able to enjoy physical exercise in the adjoining indoor play centre. They are beginning to have an awareness of their bodies and how they feel when they are active or tired. Younger children's health is starting to benefit from some of the practices staff have picked up from the Birth to three matters framework.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

The children play within a relatively safe environment. The staff carry out some risk assessments on the premises and equipment, but this is not regularly done or recorded. Appropriate safety equipment is in place, such as security doors and smoke alarms, which helps prevent children from coming to harm in the nursery. There is no risk assessment routine or procedure, therefore new hazards are not sufficiently identified. An emergency evacuation plan has been developed and the children get the opportunity to practise it. However, staff are unaware of their

individual roles in this procedure, compromising children's maximum safety. There are processes in place when children use the toilets, so those who require assistance receive it. When children use the Imagine Play Centre, they cannot be easily identified from the public by members of staff.

An appropriate staff recruitment procedure is in place. This helps to ensure children are being cared for by suitable adults. The correct numbers and ratio of qualified staff means children are appropriately supervised. Children are protected by the nursery's policies regarding child protection. A security system is used to ensure that children are only collected by adults previously made known to staff. Children's emergency contact persons are recorded. A register is kept but some details regarding the times children are cared for are missing. The lost and uncollected children procedure is in place but lacks some detail.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

The children have fun at the nursery. Overall, they settle easily each morning. There are suitable toys and activities for the children to play with, appropriate for their ages and stages. However, the variety and quantity actually available to the children is often limited and adult directed. This results in some areas of development, such as mathematical and creative development, not being adequately provided for. There is a role-play area in which children thoroughly enjoy using their imagination, although they are not always able to extend this appropriately. A quiet corner where the children can relax, look at books and listen to stories is regularly used. Staff choose what resources and activities are put out for the children at different times during the day. This means that there are limited opportunities for children to make valuable choices in their play and further develop their confidence and self esteem. Staff are beginning to put into practice some of the advice and ideas outlined in the Birth to three matters framework. Younger children are therefore benefiting from the more positive interaction and range of activities made available to them.

Nursery education:

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Staff have a very limited knowledge of the Foundation Stage. They are not successfully or effectively interpreting the early learning goals in a way which enhances and challenges the three and four-year-olds. Staff are not able to show an adequate understanding of how children learn and progress through their play experiences. Observations on individual children and activities provide some useful information, but this is not used effectively enough to influence the activities and stimulation provided.

The resources and experiences available are not fully covering the six areas of learning, nor meeting the individual needs of the children. For example, there are very few activities to develop children's knowledge and understanding of numbers, size and quantity. Mark making resources are not providing enough opportunities for children to develop their writing skills. Creative play does not always allow children to use their thinking and physical skills to influence what they want to do or make. However, some of the children are able to use their imagination when playing doctors

and vets. The planned activities do not provide children with choice nor do they appropriately challenge them, such as story time and painting. The book area is used appropriately by many of the children, they enjoy looking at the books together. Although staff talk with the children, they do not ask open-ended questions, which would indicate what children already know and to encourage them to think about what they are aiming to achieve. Children's behaviour is satisfactory. However, when some children are bored with what they are doing and become disruptive, staff do not see this as a sign for them to provide different or more challenging play opportunities. Children show great excitement when they go next door into the Playcentre for larger physical activities.

Children are beginning to show a sense of belonging as they play together. They are quite confident, friendly, showing show care and concern for others. The children say 'please' and 'thank you', for example, as they socialise with each other at snack time. There are very few opportunities for children to become more independent learners as their daily routine does not provide much variety or free play. Children can learn about the similarities and differences between themselves and others through projects, such as Chinese New Year. However, resources providing everyday images of people and the local community are limited. There are no opportunities for children to go outdoors which means that they are not able to get out in the fresh air.

Overall, the setting provides an inadequate play and learning experience for funded children and they are limited in their progress towards the early learning goals. Staff are not making good use of their time, space and resources to support children's learning effectively and appropriately.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

The nursery has few resources which show positive images of equality. What they do have is not always available on a daily basis to serve as reminders. Nonetheless, children are developing a positive attitude to others and are gaining some understanding about the wider world and community through looking at festivals, such as the Chinese New Year.

Staff endeavour to meet the individual care needs of all the children. The setting has arrangements in place to look after children with special educational needs. There is a special educational needs co-ordinator currently attending relevant training. Her role is to assess a child's needs and set individual play plans. On the whole, children behave reasonably well. Although, when bored, some children can disrupt the others. Children are beginning to understand right and wrong through boundaries and praise from adults. They are encouraged to take turns and share. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. The nursery's policies, procedures and prospectus is available for parents. Detailed information on the Foundation Stage is limited. Parents feel that they have, by and large, effective and informative communication with staff. This is usually done through daily chats and displaying information on notice boards. However, the notice boards are not located

in the best position for parents to view easily. There are mainly informal systems in place for staff and parents to share information about children's individual achievements and development. Written progress statements to show parents where and how their children are developing, are not yet in place. Staff give daily, verbal feedback to parents about their child's day and what they have achieved. The continuing growth of the partnership with parents helps contribute further to children's well-being while at the nursery.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The nursery displays their registration certificate. The provider ensures that staff are suitable to work with the children, by using an appropriate recruitment procedure. All staff have been vetted, including Criminal Record Bureau checks and references.

Child care staff do not receive regular, effective monitoring. Neither is there a clear staff appraisal or review system, to help ensure the professional development of all adults working within the setting. This has a negative effect on the quality of care children receive and experience. The setting's operational plan is in place, but lacks detail in some of the policies and procedures. The supervisor, deputy and one other member of staff hold appropriate childcare qualifications. Another staff member is currently attending training. Staff are not fully understanding of their role and responsibilities within the nursery, particularly relating to the Foundation Stage. This results in some weaknesses in the quality of the service provided. However, staff are working together to try and provide a suitable care and play environment for children. When major refurbishment and building work is completed, the extra space and equipment will help management and staff gain more success in reviewing and changing how the nursery delivers children's care.

The leadership and management of the pre-school is inadequate. There is no clear system in place for management and staff to identify areas where they need to improve the setting, for example, giving children more exciting and challenging opportunities. Also, increasing the range of activities, enabling children to become more independent and choose what they want to play with and when. Both the manager and supervisor of the nursery are keen to provide quality care and education for all children who attend. However, the systems and procedures in place to make this happen successfully are ineffective. There are weaknesses in the way staff are monitored and developed professionally. Their lack of knowledge and experience in working with the Foundation Stage and stepping stones, means that the assessment, review and planning systems are not adequately benefiting the funded children. The result is limited progress and improvement in the learning experiences for children.

The setting does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable

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

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since 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**

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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 system for identifying children from the nursery when they are in the Imagine Play Centre is effective so that children's whereabouts is always clear
- ensure children are able to make choices in their everyday play, using stimulating and appropriately challenging activities and resources
- review and consider providing further resources that reflect the diversities in today's society, especially disabilities

#### **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 all staff have an appropriate knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and are able to use it effectively in their practices
- ensure children's records contain relevant information regarding their progress and development and their next steps are identified effectively and used to inform future planning

- devise and implement a more effective planning system which will ensure all six areas of learning are covered, enabling children to progress and develop appropriately
- ensure that communication between staff and management is effective and productive, enabling children to receive the quality care and education they deserve

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 *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)