



## Playhouse Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY103294
<b>Inspection date</b>	12 September 2006
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<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Sessional 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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Playhouse Nursery is an independent day nursery. It opened in 2002 and operates from a large hall on the ground floor and one room on the first floor within the United Free Church building. The church is situated off the main road through Radlett and within walking distance of the station. A maximum of 26 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 09:15 to 12:00 and a lunch club is available from 12:00 to 12:45 and on Thursdays from 09:15 to 11:45.

The nursery is registered to provide care for a maximum of 26 children. There are currently 26 children on roll. This includes 12 children who receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with English as an additional language.

Five staff currently work with the children. All the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff is working towards a further qualification. The nursery is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance. (PSLA)

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because staff follow appropriate health and hygiene procedures. Children wash their hands before snack, lunch and cooking. Children enjoy snack times as they sit in small groups and with staff. They benefit from a varied and nutritious range of snacks including fruit, vegetables and crackers. A small group of children help to prepare the food and they can all choose between milk or water at snack time. A jug of water is readily available throughout the session to ensure that children are well-hydrated. Staff are aware of any health needs of the children and receive relevant information from parents to ensure appropriate care is provided. Children benefit from the staff's up to date knowledge in first aid. Most of the required documentation is in place with the exception of a minor weakness with regards to written parental consent for seeking emergency treatment or advice and accident records which do not effectively maintain confidentiality. This is to ensure the well-being of children is fully safeguarded.

Children enjoy physical activity during allocated sessions outside which are planned into the daily routine and throughout the year. They are able to move in different ways and practise or refine skills with various equipment. Children take risks, show enjoyment and enthusiasm when using new equipment for the first time. Children develop strong manipulative skills, they have many opportunities to use their hands. They have regular experiences of manipulating dough, pencils, paint brushes and cutting with scissors. These enjoyable experience help children develop a positive attitude to physical activity and to make a good progress in their physical development.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, safe and secure environment. Particular attention is paid to the security of the premises. This ensures that no unauthorised persons are on site and children can not leave the premises unsupervised. Emergency evacuation drills are regularly practised and staff are clear about the procedures to follow. Children use a broad range of suitable equipment and toys which are appropriate to their needs. They independently access a range of resources and activities attractively set out by staff each session. They have access to stimulating areas of play as well as a comfortable book area with well-maintained books.

Children are starting to share responsibility for their own safety through practical activities including taking part in fire evacuation drills and tidying away equipment to prevent trip hazards. Children move around the provision confidently and safely. Children learn to keep themselves safe and are further safeguarded as staff remind children not to stand on chairs. The consequences of their actions are explained to them.

Children's well-being is supported as staff follow sound procedures regarding child protection and have a clear understanding of issues and confidentiality. There are appropriate arrangements for making parents aware of the provider's responsibilities. The provider is familiar with the relevant literature with regards to the correct procedures to be followed if concerned about a child. As a result, children's welfare is protected.

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

The provision is good.

Children enter the nursery and separate from their parents or carers easily. They are happy and settle quickly to their chosen activity. They play well together, interact well with staff and move freely around the setting accessing the different activities set out for them by staff. Children show an interest in what they do, they busily engage in role play, play dough, construction, painting, cooking, sand and water play, craft and reading. Staff are warm and caring towards the children. Staff use their knowledge of early years guidance, such as the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage, to plan a wide range of stimulating, enjoyable and worthwhile activities for the children. The consistent staffing helps children build warm and trusting relationships with the adults who care for them.

Children develop good social skills. They become aware of others' needs and learn to play co-operatively. Children become increasingly independent in their personal skills, for example, older children use the toilet and wash their hands with little help and pour their own drinks at snack time. Through the nursery, staff monitor children's development. They note children's achievements and record their progress. They effectively use this information to plan activities that offer sufficient challenge and help individuals move onto the next stage of their learning and development. Staff are committed to providing good quality care and they make conscious efforts to give children exciting and interesting experiences, such as organising trips to visit local allotments or visitors to the nursery.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The manager and staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and continually develop their skills through further training. All staff are involved in planning activities and this ensures that they are clear about what children are intended to learn. They offer a broad and balanced range of activities. Teaching interests children and enables them to concentrate and persist at what they are doing. Staff encourage children's thinking and extend their learning through discussion. However, planning does not clearly identify how all six areas of learning are incorporated within the sessions. Activity plans are used to provide differentiation for those children who need more challenge or support. However, effective systems are not in place to evaluate activity plans and teaching to ensure these are informative and used appropriately for future planning. Individual plans are used to target, assess and move children's learning and development onto the next stage.

Children show confidence and work well together. They show good levels of concentration, curiosity and imagination. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. They develop good listening skills and an awareness of print through daily opportunities to share books. There are good opportunities to develop emergent writing by using various mark

making materials in their play. There are some opportunities for more able children to write their name on their own work or occasionally use them in the role play area. Children count well and use mathematical language and ideas within their play. They count together the number of children present and are interested to explore capacity as they fill various containers with water. Children are enthusiastic to cook, they help to weigh the ingredients to make dinosaur biscuits. Children have many opportunities to learn about the local environment and community. They enjoy watering and observing the plants that they have helped to grow. Children enjoy organised outings when walking to local allotments and they are keen to explore a birds nest and worms brought in. These first hand practical experiences help children learn in an enjoyable and meaningful way. Children have many opportunities to express themselves creatively. They become absorbed as they paint freely, experiment with colour, making pictures with various materials or modelling with dough. They develop their imagination through role play and respond well to music and singing. Various tools, equipment and resources help children's understanding of technology. Children enjoy the provision and therefore make good progress in all areas of learning and personal development.

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

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed and valued as individuals. Children access their environment independently. They are respected and their interests promoted. Children have access to a range of resources portraying positive images, such as dressing up clothes, dolls, books and various activities related to different festivals throughout the year. This means children are encouraged to develop a positive attitude to diversity and the wider world. The provider is aware that some children may have special needs and is proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision.

Children behave well. The staff are excellent role models, treating each other and children with kindness and respect. They support children well, as they learn to share, take turns and warmly praise children when they show acts of kindness or good behaviour. Golden rules are used to positively reinforce the expectations and boundaries of the nursery. Staff encourage parents and carers to be actively involved within the nursery through a rota system. Parents have access to clear and comprehensive policies. However, a complaints book is not in place to ensure that parents wishes and concerns are acted upon and immediately respected. This potentially will enable all to work together to support the children's well-being.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are learning to play together and share resources. Children use a good range of resources that promote equality of opportunity and knowledge of the wider world. They also have practical opportunities that bring learning to life. For example, children enjoy dressing up with a variety of outfits, they celebrate festivals and have opportunities to taste a range of foods and have equal access to all the equipment. They learn about positive behaviour as staff reinforce this in a positive way. Children engage in conversations with adults and their peers and are developing good social skills. Children show wonder when observing plants, a birds nest and worms and when learning about various living things through their work.

The partnership with parents and carers is good.

Staff actively seek parents views about their children's needs and interests before they start at the setting. Parents receive good written information about the nursery and the Foundation Stage. Notice boards display relevant information to keep parents well informed. Staff keep parents and carers updated. They make time to speak on a daily basis if it is required and home link communication books are used for parents to write relevant information to pass on to staff. The additional use of parents consultations, end of year reports, coffee mornings and parents information workshops are positive means to encourage parents to become actively involved in their child's learning. Parents praise the nursery for it's supportive staff, friendliness, close parent and nursery bond and the level of care offered to all the children.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children's care and development is supported by staff who are suitable, have relevant experience and are well qualified in caring for young children. The manager works closely with her staff, who work well as a team. The consistent staffing and daily routines help children to settle and feel secure. All the required documentation is in place for the safe and efficient management of the provision. Recruitment and vetting procedures ensure children are well protected and cared for by staff with knowledge and understanding of child development. Effective systems are in place to ensure that all staff are suitable and vetted. Group sizes and staff deployment contribute to children's good health, safety, enjoyment and achievement and take an active part in the setting. Effective organisation of activities means children are busy and stimulated. Routines run smoothly as staff set out activities and clear away, with the help of the children. Staff are always involved directly with the children or carrying out routine tasks to prepare for the next routine. Practitioners have a high regard for the well being of children. Close, caring and trusting relationships are being developed between staff and children. Staff attend a wide range of early years workshops and have completed numerous courses to show their commitment. This positively benefits the children.

The leadership and management of the provision is good. Management value their staff and utilise their skills well. All staff are involved in planning an interesting and balanced range of activities. They meet regularly to discuss the children's progress and review the standard of care provided. Children's progress is monitored and information is used in future planning. The nursery is aware of its strengths and areas for development in providing funded nursery education. Regular staff appraisals enable the manager to offer staff the necessary support. Management therefore have a clear vision for the setting with a strong focus on the personal development of the children and the staff. Overall the children's needs are met.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection the provider was asked to keep parents informed of any changes in staffing. Parents are kept informed as a staff notice board with detailed information is available in the hall. Staff are consistent which ensures that children feel a sense of belonging.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider was asked to develop planning to ensure that due emphasis is given to all aspects of the early learning goals and especially include planning for the outside play area. There are long, medium and short term plans in place to

show that a broad and balanced curriculum is being offered. Staff are more familiar with the Foundation Stage, they are involved in the planning process and take part in numerous training courses to keep their knowledge updated. However, staff have agreed to continue working on some areas of planning and further development has been acknowledged. They were also asked to improve the organisation of focussed group activities. The group ensures that all children have the opportunity to participate at their level and extend their learning within all aspects of development. Children have opportunities to experience all activities. Focussed group activities are carried out in small numbers and rotated, tick lists are completed to evidence which children have taken part.

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

Since 1 April 2004 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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### **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):

- obtain written parental consent for seeking emergency medical treatment or advice and ensure accident records maintain confidentiality
- develop a complaints log.

#### **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):

- develop effective systems to evaluate activity plans and teaching to ensure these are informative and used appropriately for future planning
- develop planning to ensure all six areas of learning are effectively highlighted.

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