



Playaways

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY232609
Inspection date	10 November 2006
Inspector	Beth Kingsland
Setting Address	Chilton School, Chilton Lane, Ramsgate, Kent, CT11 0LQ
Telephone number	07747 671416
E-mail	
Registered person	Mandy Dawn Baldwin
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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?

Playaways Pre-school is a privately owned setting. It opened in 2003 and operates from two rooms in a mobile building. It is situated in a residential area in the town of Ramsgate.

A maximum of 28 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:00 to 15:00 for term time only. A breakfast club operates from 07:30 to 09:00 and an after school club from 15:00 to 18:00. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area and the setting have access to a large playing field.

There are currently 75 children aged from two to under 14 years on roll, of these 24 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The pre-school currently supports a number of children who have special needs and who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 14 staff. There are 11 of the staff, including the registered person and the manager, who hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children gain an understanding of the importance of looking after their bodies. They recognise why they need to wash their hands before eating and this is promoted through discussion with practitioners at regular times throughout the day. They describe how germs spread as they wash their hands after playing with soil outside. For example, a child commented, 'If we don't wash our hands, we will not get rid of the germs and we will get pains in our tummy and it will hurt'. They talk about different foods they enjoy eating, recognising which are good for their bodies, such as vegetables, and their understanding of healthy eating is promoted through the introduction of a range of healthy options at snack time. Children have constant access to water, which ensures they stay hydrated.

Children stay healthy because practitioners know and implement effective health and hygiene routines, for example in preparation for lunches and when changing nappies to ensure the risk of cross-infection is minimised. Children's health is well maintained because practitioners know their individual health and dietary requirements as written information is shared and discussed with parents at registration. Secure systems are implemented to deal with accidents. However, although staff ensure that parents consent is obtained prior to administering medication, these records are not appropriately maintained. For example, some entries are not completed by staff to acknowledge that children have received the medication. As a result, information is not effectively shared with parents. Children eat packed lunches provided by their parents which staff monitor to ensure the food reflects their healthy eating philosophy. However, perishable items are left within the lunch boxes without appropriate means to ensure that food is stored at the correct temperature. As a result, children's health is compromised.

All children benefit from opportunities to play outside in the small outside play area and to participate in physical activities both indoors and out. Staff discuss with children the importance of 'fresh air' in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Children develop their physical skills using a range of smaller equipment, such as bats, balls and beanbags. The children have some opportunities to run freely, as they play on the schools playing fields. However, opportunities for children to experience vigorous and more challenging activities are not effectively promoted. For example children do not have access to climbing and balancing apparatus.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children gain a good understanding about how to keep themselves safe. They know and practise the procedures for emergency evacuation ensuring they are familiar with the routine should this be necessary in the event of a fire. Access to the provision is monitored and secure systems

implemented to ensure identification is obtained and accurate records are held on all visitors to and from the provision.

Children use a good range of play equipment and resources suitable to their individual ages and stages of development. Their safety is ensured because practitioners implement effective procedures to ensure all equipment and resources are kept clean and well maintained, and this is recorded, monitored and evaluated on a regular basis. Comprehensive formal risk assessments are implemented on a daily basis to identify risks to children. However, the maintenance of the building is the responsibility of the school and procedures have not been established to ensure that identified risks are dealt with quickly and efficiently. As a result, potential hazards are not removed, for example, some fire extinguishers are not wall mounted and a broken toilet seat not replaced.

Children are protected and safeguarded from harm because practitioners fully understand their role with regards to protecting children in their care. Written details are obtained from parents regarding who can and cannot collect their child from the setting and detailed procedures are in place and understood by all practitioners. They have a very clear understanding of child protection issues, and this is included as part of the rigorous induction procedure, and know how to implement the settings and local child protection procedures. This ensures children are fully protected whilst at the setting.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are extremely happy and settled in the pre-school provision. They have a wonderful time and benefit from the secure, homely and loving environment. Young children thrive because practitioners have a secure knowledge of child development and recognise how young children learn most effectively. Good interaction between practitioners and children ensures they develop a strong sense of self assurance and belonging to the setting. They put their arms out to practitioners, climbing onto their laps for a cuddle and a story. Relationships are well enhanced because of the effective implementation of a key worker system, which helps to develop strong bonds between practitioners, children and their parents.

Children benefit because practitioners make good use of the Birth to three matters framework to ensure that experiences offered are tailored to individual children's needs. Staff use appropriate systems to observe and monitor children's individual development, however, as yet, this information is not effectively used to guide their planning.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children have a positive attitude to learning and develop high levels of confidence and independence. They arrive happily and enthusiastically, ready to play. They develop good self help skills and recognise the feelings of others, for example as they help younger children to wash their hands. Children play an active role in their learning and are provided with a good balance of opportunities for them to initiate their own activities together with a range of adult-led experiences. However, some aspects of the daily

routine do not allow for continued learning, with children having to stop their play to tidy away equipment.

Children's speaking and listening skills are developing well as they talk confidently to practitioners and their peers about themselves and their families. Their understanding of letters sounds is extended in group discussions, for example, snack time, where children are encouraged to identify and recognise simple words. They freely access a range of writing tools and equipment in a designated writing area and this is extended into the role-play area as children are able to communicate their imagined ideas using emergent writing in different situations. Their imagination is well fostered as they have access to a good range of role-play equipment, including dressing up clothes, providing opportunities for them to act out their real and imagined ideas with their peers. Although the reading area has recently been developed, books are not displayed effectively. As a result, children do not freely select or make use of the area.

Children are confident with the daily routine and develop a good understanding of time. They are beginning to use a visual timeline to help reinforce what happens next. Their concept of time is promoted through planned activities, such as planting seeds, where children monitor the growth and development of seeds into plants. Children learn to take care of living things, for example as they water the flowers outside, and talk confidently about what their seeds need to help them grow. Their curiosity and investigative skills are satisfactorily promoted, however they have limited free access to a suitable range of equipment that extends their natural curiosity.

Children learn about patterns and staff make appropriate use of mathematical language to allow children to explore amount. For example, as children completed a shape matching activity they were encouraged to identify 'how many more' pieces they needed. Children count as part of the daily programme and are familiar with a range of mathematical songs and rhymes. However, staff miss many opportunities for children to solve simple problems as part of the everyday routine and within the activities they complete. As a result, children do not receive appropriate opportunities to explore their own mathematical ideas. Children take part in a range of creative activities. However, these tend to be staff led, with children working to complete pre-created designs or pictures. As a result, children do not experience sufficient opportunities to delight in experiences to explore creativity for themselves.

Practitioners have a clear understanding of how children learn and provide an exciting and stimulating learning environment, in which they can play an active role and become engrossed in their learning. They use a range of teaching methods, which are rooted in a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage Curriculum, to ensure younger and less able children are well supported. Curriculum planning ensures all aspects are sufficiently included and practitioners make good use of planned activities, as well as incidental opportunities to extend children's learning. However, the systems in place to observe and record children's initial starting points and continual progress towards the early learning goals are insecure. Consequently, planning is not influenced by children's assessments.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children flourish and develop secure and trusting relationships with practitioners during their time at the setting. They show high levels of confidence and self assurance because practitioners continually praise and encourage them to be independent. For example, children take responsibility for their own belongings and pre-school equipment. Children are sensitive towards each other's needs and feelings and show a good understanding of the need to share and take turns. Overall, children's behaviour is good as they learn what is acceptable and become aware of their own and other's feelings.

Children are valued as individuals and practitioners ensure they promote a fully inclusive environment, in which children's differences and similarities are recognised and celebrated. Effective systems are in place to ensure close liaison between practitioners, parents and other professionals involved in the care of children with specific requirements. Secure procedures are in place to monitor and review children with special needs, however, as yet, this information is not used in the planning of the daily programme of activities.

Children gain a real understanding about diversity through discussions and stories with practitioners, the use of a range of resources and through planned experiences linked to topics and special events. For example, they talk about their own families and those of their peers recognising the different family units. Children learn about their local environment and the place in which they live through visits and outings to shops and parks. Children celebrate events such as Pancake Day and Easter as well as being introduced to a range of cultural festivals, including the Hindu festival of Diwali. Good use of Persona dolls allow children to learn about the views of others. Consequently, children increase their understanding of the world around them and this positive approach fosters their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Strong links have been developed between parents and staff ensuring parents are able to contact staff if they have a concern. Regular completion of questionnaires ensures that staff are fully informed about parents' wishes. Parents are well informed about activities and experiences their child is involved in on a daily basis through daily discussion and the use of home link sheets. However, parents have limited access to the planning documents, as they are not made easily accessible. As a result, this has an impact on their understanding of how their child learns and develops through play. Parents are invited to share information about what their child enjoys when they start the setting, although are not invited to contribute to the initial or ongoing assessment of their child. Meetings have recently been introduced providing opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress and for them to be informed about their next steps for development. However, parents do not have direct access to their children's assessment files, which impacts on parents' ability to fully contribute to their child's learning. Written policies and procedures are shared with parents including procedures for complaints.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children thrive and have a wonderful time at the setting because all practitioners have a good understanding of how children learn and how important play is in their development. They work well as a team and communicate effectively through informal discussion and formal meetings to ensure the setting is well organised and the operational plan implemented in practice. Staff support children within their play. However, aspects of the organisation and flow of the routine is not effective in ensuring children can continue their play and be fully engaged within their selected activity. For example, children have to stop their play to tidy away equipment.

Children benefit because robust and rigorous systems are in place to recruit, appoint and induct new staff, ensuring they are suitable to work with children on an ongoing basis. Effective systems are in place to support and monitor all practitioners continually through the implementation of a secure induction programme, regular supervision meetings and the identification of ongoing training needs. Records are satisfactorily maintained, and effective systems are in place to monitor these. For example, monthly reviews of accidents enable management to assess whether any action is required and to evaluate the impact on promoting children's health. Written policies and procedures are known and implemented by practitioners, although some are still under development. Deployment of staff is highly effective helping children to develop secure relationships and self assurance. As a result, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Children make sound progress in their learning because the leadership and management of nursery education is satisfactory. The systems for planning and monitoring the educational programme offered are secure and ensure that all aspects of the curriculum are sufficiently included. However, procedures to monitor children's individual achievements and assess the impact activities and experiences have on their individual learning have not yet been fully implemented. As a result, children's assessments are not used effectively to guide planning.

Management recognise the strengths within the provision and are aware of the areas for development. Continual assessment of the setting remains a high priority as they work in partnership to monitor and evaluate all aspects of the setting enabling them to promote positive outcomes for children. As a result, they develop and use action plans as working documents to enhance the provision. Management and practitioners very much share the same vision and work extremely well together as a team to ensure that this vision is achieved. Consequently, all children are happy, settled and very much enjoy the time they spend at Playaways.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection in November 2003, one action and six recommendations were highlighted for progress. At the last education inspection in December 2004, recommendations were highlighted for progress.

Within care the setting were asked to: ensure that there are effective procedures in place for the supervision of unvetted staff; develop an action plan to ensure appropriate staff hold a

current first aid certificate; develop system for planning based on children's individual needs; develop child protection procedures; provide opportunities for parents to receive regular information on their children's progress; request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment; and review and update the complaints procedure. All staff working with children are appropriately vetted and safe to work with children and all hold current first aid qualifications. All staff have a detailed knowledge of child protection procedures and are aware of their responsibilities. Consent has been obtained from parents for seeking emergency medical treatment and they receive clear information about the procedures for complaints. Although parents are aware that staff make assessments of children's progress, they do not have regular access to children's records to allow them to be fully informed of children's attainment. Progress within each action has been satisfactory, resulting in satisfactory outcomes for children.

Within education the setting were asked to: develop procedures for behaviour management; increase opportunities to use books, develop opportunities for practical mathematics; increase the range of activities outdoors that reflect all areas of learning; and make effective use of assessment. Children's behaviour is generally good and they are provided with clear guidelines that allow them to play in harmony with their peers. Although the programme for mathematics is given emphasis, children receive insufficient opportunities to take part in a range of practical activities that allow them to solve simple problems. Children have daily opportunities to play freely in the outside area and good progress has been made to ensure the area reflects all areas of learning. Although staff have begun to make assessments of children's progress, information is not used effectively to inform the planning of activities to ensure children's continued progress. Progress within each action has been satisfactory, resulting in satisfactory outcomes for children.

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.

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):

- develop effective procedures to ensure that perishable items from children's lunch boxes are stored effectively
- develop procedures for the administration of medication
- develop procedures for risk assessment to ensure identified issues are dealt with promptly and effectively
- develop the management of the daily routine to ensure children's needs are effectively met(also applies to education)

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 procedures for assessment to ensure information gained is used effectively to inform the planning of activities(this also applies to care)
- increase opportunities for children to use and enjoy books
- develop opportunities for children to take part in practical mathematical activities
- develop opportunities for children to freely experience a range creative activities

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