



The Children's Place Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	311401
Inspection date	20 September 2006
Inspector	Paula Fretwell
Setting Address	Dewsbury & District Hospital, Halifax Road, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, WF13 4HS
Telephone number	01924 512077
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Registered person	The Childrens Place Ltd
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 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?

The Children's Place nursery is situated within the grounds of Dewsbury District Hospital and operates in a converted building which was formerly a recreation centre. It is one of six nurseries run by The Children's Place Ltd. The nursery, established in 1993, primarily provides a service for the employees of the hospital.

The nursery is open each weekday from 07.00 to 18.00 all year round except bank holidays. Currently there are 51 children on roll, including children who receive funding for nursery education. The nursery welcomes children with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

There are 10 members of staff who all have or are working towards appropriate early years qualifications. In addition to those working with the children there is a designated cook who

prepares the meals. The setting receives support from a qualified teacher employed by the company and from an advisory teacher through the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Effective measures are in place to promote children's good health. Hygienic procedures are followed within the baby rooms to help prevent the risk of cross infection. For example, clean individual bedding is provided and dummies are individually stored. Older children understand and demonstrate consistent hygienic practices. They confidently explain the importance of hand washing and give knowledgeable explanations of why they need to do this. Children's awareness is increased through gentle reminders from practitioners and activities, such as stories about germs. Children do not attend the setting if they are unwell or infectious, which helps to protect the health of others, and the clear policy on sickness is shared with parents. Minor accidents are promptly dealt with and recorded in good detail, with sensitive reassurance given to children.

Very young children's needs are met through the effective implementation of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Babies' emotional well-being is maintained because they are secure in their relationships with their key person and with other practitioners; they have opportunities for individual interaction and their unique needs for sleeping and feeding are met according to their demands. Practitioners follow babies' own preferred routines and set aside uninterrupted time for cuddles, such as at sleep time.

Children's dietary needs are met very well through effective working with parents and the nursery cook. Menus are carefully worked out, seasonal, varied and checked by a nutritionist to ensure they are balanced in content. The nursery cook and all the staff have a clear knowledge about children's individual requirements and information is displayed prominently for staff reference. Children enthusiastically enjoy participating in meal and snack times and their independence is promoted very well. Babies under two years enjoy mealtimes with full support from their key person according to their developmental needs. Older children thoroughly enjoy a successful 'self-service' system at lunchtime in which they serve their own food, either at their table or 'canteen style' according to their ages. Their independence and decision making skills are enhanced with gentle guidance from staff as they choose how much of which foods to eat. In planned activities, older children explore foods which are good for them and talk about those which are not. Mealtimes are very social occasions as children enjoy sitting together to chat with their peers and with practitioners. Children's need for regular drinks is fully addressed throughout the day so they do not become thirsty.

Children engage in regular physical exercise through their play choices indoors and outside. They have daily access to the outdoor area and choose from a basic range of activities. However, opportunities for older children's physical challenges are currently limited as the nursery's plans for outdoors are not yet being implemented. Children are aware of their own physical needs and actively contribute to their own well-being. For example, they know when they need a rest or a drink.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The environment is very safe, secure and welcoming to children. They freely move around the play areas and independently access a wide range of good quality resources, although some fixtures, such as carpet areas, are showing signs of being well used. Resources for babies are safe and stimulating and are stored at low levels to encourage their developing independence and to enable them to explore. Older children enjoy choosing their own activities and they safely select and put away toys and equipment. Practitioners ensure the safe use of all resources by joining in with children's play and making sure resources are used appropriately. Children's security is given very high priority and staff are vigilant about monitoring access to the building, only allowing authorised adults to collect the children.

High priority is given to making sure children are safe and detailed risk assessments are in place for all areas and these are known by all staff. The premises are checked regularly to ensure all potential hazards are eliminated from the environment so children can play safely. Fire drills are regularly practised and recorded and staff are clear what to do in the event of a fire. Children are encouraged to be aware of safety in their everyday play through reminders from practitioners as opportunities arise, such as taking care when using the outdoor toys. Children are supervised well and practitioners are observant of them in their play

Practitioners understand the importance of safeguarding children. They know the signs and symptoms of possible abuse and how to protect children, and they are aware of the appropriate procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very happy, sociable, confident and independent. They are active learners and engage in purposeful play as they enjoy their time in the setting. Children are friendly and have very positive relationships with each other and with adults. Children benefit from a pleasant environment in which they enthusiastically join in with a wide range of well-planned opportunities, and they include practitioners in their activities, such as when washing dollies in the water play. Practitioners are very enthusiastic, approachable and caring; they are interested in what the children do, interact well with them and use skilled questioning to encourage them to think, such as in sand and water play. Children have good opportunities to repeat activities and practise their skills and they enjoy free play with their peers.

Practitioners are very skilled at managing the different needs of the children, ensuring that they all receive individual attention. Children are encouraged to share and play together through good role modelling and positive reinforcement. Very young children enjoy suitable play opportunities; each child's key person is aware of their individual stage of development and their personal needs for care, learning and play. For example, practitioners join in with young children's developing imaginary play, such as wrapping dollies in blankets and putting them in their cot. Babies enjoy games, such as peek-a-boo, with staff and they have fun exploring resources, such as real keys and household items under close supervision. They explore and play in a relaxed environment and enjoy background music at times to accompany their activities.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Practitioners have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and this enables children to make good progress through the stepping stones in all areas of learning. Children's personal, social and emotional development is especially good and this is evident in all aspects of their interaction with others. Children are polite and courteous; they show respect for one another and older children are considerate of their younger peers. For example, older children help younger ones put shoes on, pour drinks and help them sit on their chairs. Children compliment each other, such as in team games when they praise each other's efforts. Children greet each other and staff enthusiastically and give affectionate hugs to say hello.

Children's progress is regularly tracked and written assessments clearly illustrate how they are learning through play. Well-planned activities cover all the areas of learning and practitioners use spontaneous opportunities to build upon children's interests. For example, opportunities for children to learn about eggs are created from simple discussion and practitioners enable children to explore their thinking through impromptu activities. Practitioners observe children as they play and record what they can do, and they use children's achievements to help plan the next steps in their learning. Children's ideas are listened to and effective questioning techniques encourage them to think. Practitioners are skilled at adapting activities to suit each child's stage of development in order for them to have sufficient challenges.

Children are beginning to understand that there are different ways of communicating and they communicate clearly with each other and with adults. They are developing good speaking and listening skills which are developed further through planned activities, such as at circle time. Children enjoy books and they join in enthusiastically with familiar stories; some children attempt to read to the group, holding a book and telling the story from memory and pictures. Children recognise their own names on their place cards and on their individual drawers. They are beginning to form letters and enjoy writing their own names or writing letters to post. Children are skilled at negotiating with one another in their play, using a range of communication skills and good vocabulary.

Most children count up to 10 and many can count beyond. They enjoy counting in everyday situations, such as how many of them are in the group. They understand that numbers have meaning and they confidently express their ages in number and by holding up the correct number of fingers, 'I'm three and after Christmas I'll be four'. Children show a very good understanding of shape and they notice shapes in their environment. For example, they talk about shapes of roofs on buildings and the size and shape of their toast at snack time, 'Big people eat rectangle toast and small people eat square toast'. Children use mathematical language in their play and conversations, such as 'bigger than', 'smaller than', 'full' and 'half-full'. They are learning to solve problems, such as placing shaped items into a sandwich box in the home corner so it will close properly.

Children are developing a good knowledge and understanding of the world around them. They ask lots of questions about how things work and show much interest in their environment through topics, such as mini-beasts and birds. They are enthusiastic in their topics, such as castles, and are knowledgeable in their explanations of how drawbridges and moats work, 'to

keep the people safe inside'. Children are skilful in their use of simple equipment; they use the computer and they can work through simple programmes; they experiment with calculators, telephones and measuring tapes. Children enjoy talking about their family and friends, such as their next door neighbours and their extended family members. For example, children say things like 'My grandma is making me a cake for my tea', 'I went to my friend's party' and 'My cousin has a new house but it's a long way away'.

Children enjoy many opportunities for creative play and they experiment with different media, responding in a range of ways to what they see, hear, touch and feel. Children sing familiar songs in planned singing sessions and they sing spontaneously as they play. Children enjoy clapping rhythms and moving their bodies to action songs, such as The Grand Old Duke of York. Children use their imaginations well in role-play situations and they make good use of the home corner to recreate familiar situations, such as making breakfast or going on a bus. Children discuss textures, such as in sand play and they make 'a smooth, cool, sandy house' for their imaginary mouse and 'a sprinkly, crumbly princess cake' for their tea party.

Children are developing a good awareness of their bodies; they show awareness of space, talk about 'getting out of puff' when they run fast, and they are learning that exercise is good for them 'to grow big and strong'. They enjoy planned activities, such as balancing on low beams, and they are learning good hand-eye co-ordination as they throw and catch bean bags. Activities are planned to include dancing, ring games and keep fit to further develop children's physical skills, although opportunities for challenges outdoors are limited. Children show good control over small equipment and tools, such as pencils and scissors, and they have many opportunities to practise the skills learned. Children learn how to keep themselves healthy and well-planned activities support their learning. For example, children have a visit from the oral hygienist, bring their toothbrush from home and practise teeth cleaning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Partnership with parents is good. Children's individual needs are thoroughly discussed with parents and all children are valued, respected and welcomed in the setting. Effective, regular written and verbal communication ensures the individual needs of the children are met. Staff foster positive links with children's own culture and language, involving parents. Staff spend time talking and listening to parents and they ensure relevant information is exchanged daily. New children are settled in at their individual pace and parents spend this time sharing important information with staff. Newsletters and regular progress reports include parents in their child's activities. Parents of children receiving funded nursery education are sometimes asked to link in with the topic by doing associated homework activities, such as bringing items of interest. Parents are very happy with the service their children receive and they feel included in their child's time at the setting.

Children behave very well. They listen to practitioners, show good manners and have respect for one another. Successful strategies are used to manage children's behaviour, and they develop confidence through positive language, praise and encouragement given to them. All children enjoy responsibility for small tasks according to their abilities, such as when serving themselves at lunchtime. Practitioners calmly speak with children and this promotes settled behaviour and

helps to solve minor disputes in a positive way. Encouraging statements, such as 'We're all friends at nursery' help children play co-operatively together. Children enjoy receiving meaningful, descriptive praise for their achievements and each child is acknowledged and affirmed. Older children enjoy being 'stars of the day' and receiving stickers for their good efforts. Children's artwork is valued and displayed well and they proudly show off their creations, such as when making a castle or a tapestry painting. Children give praise to each other in their play, such as 'Good shot, you're really good at this'.

Children are actively encouraged to learn about themselves and others through a wealth of positive images in books, toys and activities. Different cultural festivals are acknowledged, and a detailed equal opportunities policy supports the setting's practice. Simple explanations are given to children about difference, which helps them to understand the needs of others. There are good support systems in place to meet the individual needs of children with disabilities or learning difficulties. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The quality of leadership and management is good. There are sound procedures in place to monitor the effectiveness of the care and education provision and there is a clear sense of purpose and direction. Staff are consulted and included in the regular evaluation of the setting's strengths and weaknesses and their input is firmly valued. All staff are motivated and interested in their work and this is evident in the good team working throughout the nursery. The setting works closely with the advisory teacher from the local authority.

Children benefit from the well-organised environment which effectively promotes their independence and confidence. Children are very capable, initiate their own play and are confident to practise what they have learned; activity areas ensure children access toys and resources safely. Practitioners are well qualified and there are robust recruitment procedures to ensure all staff are suitable to work with children. All minimum staff-child ratios are maintained and staff are deployed effectively to ensure the safety and well-being of the children.

Practitioners communicate clearly with one another to ensure the children's needs are fully met. Children are grouped with key people according to their developmental stages within the open-style care rooms and practitioners are flexible to children's individual needs. For example, curious babies peeping through the gate may be allowed to join in the singing with the older children and older babies can explore the wider nursery under close supervision. At times, children are distracted by each other's activities, such as when noise levels rise during musical play. This sometimes impacts upon the concentration of older children, although practitioners are skilled at refocusing their attention.

Policies and procedures support the practice and illustrate how children's welfare is promoted, and all staff are aware of these. However, the documentation for child protection and complaints does not yet reflect recent legislative changes. Thorough, detailed recording of daily information is in place to support the practice, and this is filed confidentially.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection of care the provider was asked to make improvements to the recording of the arrival and departure of children. All details are thoroughly recorded and there is a secure and accurate system to show which children are on the premises.

The provider was asked to continue to update staff's knowledge of childcare practices to further enhance the good service, and this is an ongoing feature within the nursery. Staff are given many opportunities for further training and development to enhance the care given to the children.

The last inspection of funded nursery education raised issues in relation to improving the outdoor provision to provide more physical challenges for children. Extensive plans have been prepared, although these are not yet being implemented because of proposed further development planned within the nursery.

The provider was asked to provide opportunities for children to extend their use of imagination through a wider range of stories and well-planned role-play areas. Children have good opportunities in this area and their creative development is promoted well through a wide range of stories and effective role-play choices.

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 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):

- review the policies and procedures for child protection and complaints to ensure they reflect recent changes to legislation.

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 existing plans for the outdoor provision, to ensure that all children have appropriate challenges in their physical play such as climbing.

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