

Play Pit Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 251782
Inspection date 09 July 2007
Inspector Moira Oliver

Setting Address 9 Brownlow Road, Felixstowe, Suffolk, IP11 7EX

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Registered person Play Pit Day Nursery

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?

Play Pit Day Nursery, known as Holly Lodge, is one of two nurseries run by Play Pit Day Nursery and opened in 1990. It operates from eight rooms in a detached house in Felixstowe. The nursery serves the local area.

A maximum of 54 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 a secure enclosed outdoor play and garden area.

There are currently 264 children from seven months to nine years on roll. Of these 28 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language

The nursery employs 12 staff to work with the children. Eight of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. Four staff are working towards a recognised early year's qualification. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because the setting has effective health and hygiene practices in place. For example, staff wear clean gloves for each child during nappy changing and they clean the mat after each child. They put nappies into bags and dispose of them appropriately limiting the spread of infection. High chairs are cleaned thoroughly after each use and there is a daily routine for cleaning baby toys and equipment. Babies sleep in cots with clean bedding and feeding utensils are sterilised. Food is hygienically prepared on clean surfaces, stored at the appropriate temperatures and a dish washer is used to ensure utensils are thoroughly cleaned.

Children learn to understand simple hygiene routines when staff introduce pets such as a rabbit and a dog and discuss the importance of hand washing after stroking them. Children routinely wash their hands after visiting the toilet and are encouraged to wash before meal times. However, children do not always wash their hands before snack time which poses a potential health risk. Children learn how to protect themselves in the sun and help staff to apply sun cream and put on their sun hats.

Children have their health and dietary needs met and increase their understanding of healthy living as the nursery provide a healthy, balanced menu. Food is freshly prepared every day and children have a variety of fresh fruit and vegetables throughout the day. They are able to choose from a range of healthy snacks and serve themselves at lunch time, ensuring they have choice and extra helpings if they wish. Staff work closely with the parents who ensure they are aware of any special diets, allergies and intolerances. Staff follow the requests of parents ensuring children's dietary needs are met. Menus are displayed and available to parents at all times and staff in the baby and toddler rooms ensure parents are informed of their child's food intake daily.

Babies and young children have opportunities to sleep and rest throughout the day. They have quiet sleep areas where staff either sit with them or monitor them regularly, ensuring they are safe. Staff work closely with parents who inform them if their child needs more sleep or if they would rather they had less. Children who are unwell receive appropriate care and are able to sleep when they need to and parents are informed. The majority of the staff are qualified in first aid and accidents are recorded appropriately and signed by the parents. Written parental permission is requested for any medication to be administered and staff record and sign the entry each time.

Toddlers have freedom to wander between rooms upstairs and toys such as a small climbing frame and slide encourage them to develop their physical skills. They enjoy pushing wheeled toys around outside and scooting along on them. Children use cutlery at lunch time and manage to feed themselves with increasing skill.

Older children are becoming skilled in pedalling bikes and negotiating their way around children and obstacles in the outdoor area. They enjoy jumping over a skipping rope, scooting scooters along, and pushing other children around in a pushchair. They make their own obstacle courses and are able to balance across wooden planks from one tyre to another and jump from one stepping stone to another as they go around behind the tree. A woodwork bench provides opportunities for children to handle simple tools, this increases their dexterity.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure, welcoming environment. A new security system is in place and parents ring a doorbell for staff to let them in. This ensures children do not leave unattended. The rooms are well ventilated with high opening windows and there is a fan in the conservatory to ensure the temperature is comfortable. Safety gates are used to ensure the children remain in their own areas and the outdoor area is enclosed and safe. Children are protected from hazards because staff carry out safety checks every day and risk assessments are completed and actions addressed.

Children learn to keep themselves safe as staff remind them how to use the equipment safely. For example they talk to them about the safe way to come down a slide and they are encouraged to carry scissors safely with the use of scissor baskets. Children take part in fire drills and know the routine and why it is important to follow the staff quickly to the outside meeting place.

Children remain safe on outings as staff ensure they have additional staff to ensure higher ratios. The younger children are secured in pushchairs or walk with reins or wrist straps to ensure they are safe. Older children learn about road safety and to keep together as a group. Parents are informed of outings and provide written consent.

Children are protected because staff understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident and independently select their activities from accessible low level shelving. They show interest in their chosen activities and some concentrate for extended periods of time. For example, when designing and building a large vehicle with the construction bricks, they persevere to ensure all the pieces stay together and adapt it until they are satisfied. Staff change the activities providing extra ones if the children show signs of boredom ensuring they remain interested.

Children use their initiative as they use large stones in the garden as 'burgers', sprinkling sand over them before pretending to cook them. They return items to their correct home when they find a plant on the floor which belongs on the interest table.

Children are treated with respect and kindness as staff provide excellent role models. Children are supported by the staff to express their feeling and needs and to use words to get what they want. For example, when children do not want to play with others the adults suggest that they tell the others that they want to play alone. Staff effectively support children to manage their own behaviour and to be polite and respectful to others.

Children under three years benefit from staff who use the 'Birth to three matters' framework for planning and assessment. Babies enjoy a range of cause and effect toys, they happily roll a wooden toy to make the bells in it jingle. They smile at the staff as they play with them and staff encourage them to communicate, chatting to them and responding to their sounds. They enjoy sharing books in a small group and chatting about the pictures. Children have fun in the 'shop' where they sell pretend food to the staff using paper money, some take the food back to cook it to share with friends. Staff state that children have opportunities to handle and play

with a range of media. For example, banging saucepans with wooden spoons and whisks, exploring the textures of a variety of fabrics and in the Autumn they enjoy exploring dried leaves and twigs. Children enjoy messy activities and paint using brushes, fingers and printing items. They explore the outdoors as they feel the grass and the soil beneath their feet.

School aged children who attend the nursery for the holiday play scheme and after school club take part in a wide range of exciting projects including science experiments, face painting and circus skills. Photographs show children making costumes, dressing-up as pirates or animals and making a safari jeep out of boxes big enough for them all to play inside. They go on outings to local places such as parks, the cinema and have picnics. After school the children enjoy 'letting off steam' in the garden as they ride round on bikes and skip with ropes. Staff join in with their games of 'cops and robbers' as they use their imaginations in role play.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals and staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Staff do not use the stepping stones to plan and assess, however, they identify the children's starting points through assessment and build on these throughout the children's time at nursery using individual play plans. They provide and plan a balanced programme where children have a great deal of free choice. Staff use daily planning sheets to plan their chosen project, covering all areas of learning in each activity. However, by not focussing on one or two clear learning intentions it is difficult to identify what the children achieve during these activities.

Staff have excellent strategies to support children to manage their own behaviour. They listen to the children with sensitivity and understanding, encouraging the children to use words to explain how they feel and to assert themselves by telling others what they do not like, ensuring their needs are met. They are informed when there is five more minutes before they have to tidy the toys away, ensuring they have time to finish their activities. Children come in and are eager to select their chosen activities, however, those more able, do not have sufficient resources to extend their learning and challenge them fully, limiting their potential.

Children make good relationships with their peers and the staff, they are supported to treat each other with respect and listen to each others views. They are learning good manners and are polite. They demonstrate high levels of confidence and self-esteem as they happily take part in activities chatting to each other and the staff. They take responsibility for their environment as they help to tidy the equipment and sweep the sand up from the floor. They patiently take turns when playing games such as 'Snakes and ladders' and share the resources well. Children have exceptionally well developed self-help skills as they serve themselves at the lunch table and pour their own drinks. They access the aprons before playing in the water and manage to put them on correctly.

Children are skilful communicators, they chat freely to each other and the staff. Language skills are developing as they use a range of descriptive words to express themselves when engaging in role play. They have many opportunities to listen to their peers during circle time, meal times and in their play. They listen as other children tell the group about their holiday. Children enjoy stories together and listen in a large group offering their comments on the story. They know how books work and turn pages one at a time. They enjoy mark making with chalks on the paving slabs outside and access resources such as cards and envelopes to 'write' letters to themselves. These resources provide opportunities for children to write for a purpose.

Children are gaining a good understanding of mathematical concepts and use number with confidence as they match the numbers on the parking bays when they put their cars and bikes away. They are able to count the birds on a puzzle and the number of children in their group. Simple calculation takes place as children join in with familiar number rhymes such as 'Three little monkeys' and staff support them with computer games. Children talk about size as they try to put on a belt that is too small for them. Staff extend their learning by introducing mathematical language using comparisons to help them find a child the belt will fit. They use tape measures confidently to measure their feet and the staff's feet, developing their awareness of size.

Children take part in a range of topics throughout the year which include seasons and festivals. They learn about their own cultures and those of others through books, pictures and celebrations. For example, they celebrate Christmas, Easter, Divali and Hunukkah learning about foods and costumes associated with the festivals. Children have opportunities to explore their local environment with walks to the park and the seafront. Valuable learning takes place when they observe growth and change through planting activities and they understand that plants need sunlight and water to grow. They enjoy designing and making vehicles out of construction toys and excitedly demonstrate how their cars use wings to fly. They have some opportunities to use a computer and have fun with a remote controlled bug as they skilfully steer it around the room.

Children happily express and communicated their ideas in role-play as they get inside a cardboard box and pretend that it is a space ship. They find other boxes to wear on their heads and ask the staff if they can paint them. Children's imagination is not fully developed and challenged due to limited role-play and creative resources. They confidently select collage materials to make pictures using a variety of different textures. They join in with familiar songs and rhymes at circle time and have opportunities to listen to music, play percussion instruments and express themselves through movement.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are eager to arrive at nursery and settle well because staff work closely with parents to ensure they know the children's likes and dislikes. Children bring comforters and staff support them when their parents leave acknowledging their feelings and providing reassurance and cuddles. They are cared for by staff who are sensitive to their needs, the staff take a genuine interest in the children and their families and children have a strong sense of belonging.

Children are confident, happy and relaxed, they build close relationships with the staff and their peers. Staff support them to develop high levels of self-esteem, recognising and praising their achievements. The nursery welcomes all children and they are valued and treated with respect. Children's first language is respected and staff seek advice and support to enable them to provide appropriate care. Books are available in other languages and resources such as dressing-up clothes are available to develop the children's awareness of the wider world. Children benefit from staff who are proactive in training, information gathering and working with other agencies to ensure all children are included fully. They work closely with parents ensuring a consistent approach.

Children and parents are welcomed and the staff are approachable and friendly. Parents are consulted and informed about all areas of their children's care and education. Daily diaries are in use for the under-two's ensuring information is shared. For example, parents inform the

staff of how their child has slept and staff record all food intake, nappy changes, sleeps and what the children have enjoyed playing with that day. A nursery diary is kept at the front door for parents to read on arrival informing them of activities, outings and everyday events. The nursery have a complaints procedure which is displayed for parents, however, the address of the regulator is incorrect.

Children's behaviour within the setting is of a consistently high standard. Children understand right from wrong as staff provide clear explanations and support the children to resolve their own problems. Children are polite and courteous, treating each other and the staff with respect. They are supported to use words to get their needs met and they negotiate turn taking with increasing skill.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are welcomed as they arrive and there is always a member of staff available to speak to them. Parents are invited to share their child's records every term where they are given an opportunity to discuss their child's development with the key worker. Parents are aware that they can see and discuss their child's records at any time. They receive information about the curriculum through displays, photographs and are provided with an information booklet when their child starts, keeping them informed. Parents are very happy with the care and education their children receive at nursery, they speak highly of the staff and comment on how well their children have developed and how happy they are to attend the nursery.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Robust recruitment and vetting procedures ensure children are protected and cared for by staff. The majority of the staff are qualified and experienced and have a good knowledge of child development and how children learn. New staff receive clear advice and support about their roles and responsibilities and they are encouraged to develop their skills through training. They are given time and support to become familiar with the nursery and all the policies and procedures.

Staff have a high regard for the children, they speak to them with respect and value them as individuals, encouraging and supporting the children to develop their ideas. Staff deployment ensures ratios are adhered to and children receive individual attention when needed. Staff have experience in all age groups within the nursery enabling them to move around where the need is and to support their studies, providing experience across the age range. Valuable support is provided by a team of support staff including a cook, a kitchen assistant and cleaners enabling the other staff to work directly with the children.

Documentation is available and confidential. The operational plan provides clear information ensuring the smooth running of the nursery and is in the process of being updated to reflect the provision more accurately.

Leadership and management is good. The leadership and management of the nursery education contributes to the children's progress towards the early learning goals. Supportive leaders encourage each other and the staff in their roles within the nursery. They are committed to training and professional development and provide opportunities, encouragement and support. Staff work as an enthusiastic team and understand their roles and responsibilities in developing

the children's learning. The provision is monitored and evaluated regularly through observation and daily discussions with the staff. They meet formally for staff meetings and annual appraisals ensuring staff develop to their full potential. The leaders are aware of the nursery's strengths and are continually striving to improve their provision further.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last nursery education inspection the nursery was asked to review and enhance the existing procedure for assessment and planning to ensure children make good progress through the stepping stones to the early learning goals in all areas of learning inside and outdoors. Staff now observe and record children's development on a regular basis, transferring it into the children's records. They use individual play plans to ensure children progress in all areas and have improved the outdoor area to enrich play opportunities.

At the last care inspection the nursery was asked to encourage more independence skills for the children at snack times and lunch times. Children are now demonstrating high levels of skill as they help themselves to snacks, serve themselves at meal times and pour their own drinks.

Supervisors have up-dated their qualifications to enable them to be responsible for the children and staff in their rooms. They are qualified to care for the children appropriately.

Behaviour management has improved significantly, all the staff took part in training which was organised at the nursery to ensure all staff and leaders could attend, providing a consistent approach. Ongoing training is taking place as the staff support the new staff members and meetings are arranged where staff discuss issues and strategies ensuring children are supported effectively to manage their own behaviour.

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):

- ensure children are encouraged to learn about personal hygiene and always wash their hands before meals and snacks
- ensure the complaints policy is up to date and includes the correct address for Ofsted.

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):

- improve the planning of the daily project to identify the main learning intentions
- increase the range of resources to provide on-going challenge for the more able children to promote and support their learning.

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