



Footprints

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY305659
Inspection date	10 October 2006
Inspector	Jenny Kane
Setting Address	'Imagine', Footprints Day Nursery, Britannia Lane, Kingsnorth, Ashford, Kent, TN23 3JD
Telephone number	01233 652645
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Registered person	Ashford Play Centre 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 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?

Footprints has been registered since July 2005. Owned and managed by Ashford Play Centre Ltd. the nursery operates from a self-contained area within the premises. The nursery is located in Kingsnorth near Ashford. There is access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

A maximum of 54 children may attend the nursery at any one time. It is open Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 18:00 all year round. Children attend for a variety of sessions and the group serves a wide catchment area.

There are currently 18 children under five years on roll. Of these, seven children receive funding for early education. Children from the age of five to 12 years also attend the holiday club and these numbers vary. The group supports children with learning difficulties and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs eight staff. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years childcare qualifications and one is working towards a qualification. The group receives support from the Local Authority Early Years advisory teacher.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in bright and cheerful premises. Staff promote the health of the children by maintaining good standards of hygiene and cleanliness. They pay good attention to their own personal hygiene, for example, by using disposable gloves when changing nappies and washing hands before preparing food. Children know that washing their hands helps to prevent the spread of germs. Older children are independent when using the bathroom and are developing self-care skills. Accident and medication records are up to date and kept appropriately. First aid resources are ready to hand and the majority of staff hold first aid certificates. As a result, the nursery is able to act in the best interest of a child who has an accident or needs medication.

Although children enjoy healthy snacks of fruit and vegetables during the morning, some of the main meals lack nutrition and variety. Children do not help in the preparation of meals and because the organisation of meal times is disorganised, older children become disruptive. Drinks are not freely available and children do not help themselves to drinking water after strenuous activity. Toddlers use suitable highchairs with restraints, babies sit on the staff's laps during feeding, and this helps them to feel secure. Menus displayed in the lobby and the recording of food intake in the contact book for younger children, helps to keep parents informed.

There are good opportunities for physical play. Children use the outside play area on a regular basis and they enjoy being in the fresh air. Staff encourage children to partake in messy play outside and they have access to sand, water and painting. Children enjoy painting the chalkboard with water using big brushes. They laugh and cooperate while they move about making marks and patterns. The outdoor play equipment is limited, particularly for the older children and the babies. However, older children use the indoor play centre next door. They enjoy jumping into the ball pool, climbing and sliding in the soft play area and riding about in cars and on bikes in the roadway area.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a secure and welcoming environment. A risk assessment of all areas means that the children are able to move about and use the space freely. However, a lack of shelving makes some areas cluttered. The downstairs play area divides into two areas and there is some mixing of age groups during parts of the day. Staff are aware of their responsibilities to keep children safe and check all areas of the nursery and the garden before use. The outside door to the garden area swings in the wind and children are at risk of trapping their fingers. Staff supervise the children at all times throughout the day and there are appropriate procedures in place to follow in an emergency.

Babies sleep according to their individual needs in the sleep room. They have their own cots and bedding and a member of staff monitors them closely. Sleep patterns for babies and toddlers recorded in the contact book and discussion with parents helps to ensure consistency with home routines. After lunch, toddlers sleep on the floor to one end of their play area. There are comfort and safety issues regarding this practice because they are sleeping alongside playing toddlers.

A reasonable range of toys and equipment is available for children's play, which is suitable for their age and stage of development. Older children make choices for themselves and freely select what they play with from the toys that are stored in boxes and on shelves. Some of these have labels for easy identification and this helps children's literacy. Posters and children's artwork on the walls help to make the environment interesting.

The manager has a good awareness of her responsibilities in relation to child protection issues. There are clear written procedures in place, which the group shares with the parents. Senior staff have a good working knowledge and have attended training in the subject. This safeguards and promotes the children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled. They receive plenty of individual attention and benefit from a key worker system. Babies receive good one-to-one care and have trusting relationships with staff who are quick to respond to their needs. They are beginning to communicate their needs verbally and non-verbally and express their feelings. Toddlers move about confidently exploring their environment. They are interested in the toys and enjoy playing, particularly when the staff members join in. For example, they get the dressing up clothes from the rail and staff extend and encourage their play. One child dresses as a princess and staff take photographs, which are later shared with the parent. The use of contact books gives parents basic information about younger children's care. The team leader for the under threes has a good working knowledge of Birth to three matters and is introducing the framework into the planning of activities. She intends to introduce reference to this into the contact books thus ensuring parents have more information about their children's progress and achievements.

Older children play well together learning important social skills, such as sharing and turn taking. For example, during role-play, two children pretend to go shopping with trolleys and prams. They load them up with packets and boxes saying, "I'm going shopping, shall we go together?" They further discuss what to buy and when other children want to join in, they accommodate and cooperate allowing them to participate with their play. Appropriate strategies according to the age and stage of development work well in practice and are effective in helping children learn right from wrong. However, at times children do not have enough time to finish activities or receive sufficient explanation about why it is time to pack away. As numbers attending at present are low, children receive a good amount of individual attention and as a result, children are well behaved.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making generally good progress across the six areas of learning. Although staff have worked hard to reorganise the environment to provide stimulating play areas, the lack of resources sometimes limits children's play and learning opportunities.

Children have good relationships with adults and peers. They learn to work together by sharing toys, by taking turns and negotiating. Children demonstrate reasonably good levels of concentration during group activities, but at times they are disrupted by younger and less able children. They show independence regarding personal self-care, for example, when using the bathroom and choosing what they play with. However, there are limited opportunities for children to pour their own drinks at snack times.

Children speak confidently, talking about themselves and things that happen at home. They join in well, listen to instructions and initiate conversations between one another. Children listen reasonably well during story time and although staff try to make this activity fun, many of the books are uninteresting and are in short supply. Children are learning to recognise familiar words, such as their own names. They use the mark making area well and have access to a reasonable amount of small tools.

Children discuss number, shape and size through daily activities, such as circle time and when using the play dough. During snack children identify that the mugs are different colours and one child breaks a bread stick into several pieces. However, staff miss this chance to extend the discussion by looking at division and what happens when things are cut into pieces. Some children can count up to 10 and are beginning to recognise numbers, for example, during circle time they use number labels to identify the date and year.

Children enjoy using their senses during play with paint, sand, water, cornflour and cooked spaghetti. They also enjoy craft and making things but at times, this is staff led. Children listen to recordings of nursery rhymes and songs during the day. However, they do not partake in music sessions because there is a limited supply of musical instruments. Children's imagination is developing well as they act out their experiences during role-play

Staff working with the funded children continue to improve their knowledge of the Foundation stage and they are beginning to use the curriculum guidance effectively. The manager has a very good understanding of how children learn and progress. Through her guidance and enthusiasm, staff are beginning to plan activities and learning opportunities for children which are meaningful. The planning has clear learning objectives, links with the stepping stones and shows how activities can be extended. However, during some activities staff miss the opportunity to extend children's learning further.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The nursery fosters the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children are valued and cared for as individuals with their own particular needs. Older children show concern for others, make choices and express personal preferences. Although they have good access to the toys and self-selection is encouraged, the range of resources that promote

awareness of equal opportunities is very limited. Children participate in some activities and festivals, which helps their knowledge and understanding of the world and different cultures. Children have limited opportunity to develop a sense of place or explore the natural world because they do not go out in the community. Children have access to Information Technology and although they are competent using the equipment, the computer is not accessible as a matter of course. In addition, there are very limited resources for children to look at why things happen and how things work.

Staff are committed to a policy of inclusion. They discuss the children's backgrounds with parents, to ensure they meet any specific needs or cultural requirements. Children have individual play plans and their key workers use assessment records to ensure each child receives appropriate care. Senior staff are experienced, have undertaken training in special needs and are confident in their ability to provide care for children with a range of differing needs. The ground floor of the premises is user-friendly. Access is good, there is parking close to the entrance and facilities are suitable for children with special needs or with a disability.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. The manager and staff are developing and establishing working relationships with the parents, which are positive and proactive. A recent review of the policies and procedures has produced written information, which clearly states the service provided. The prospectus is in the process of being updated and will give existing and prospective parents and carers additional written information about the provision's care and education. Parents discuss with staff what their child has done at nursery when they collect them at the end of the day. Senior staff are accessible and have a professional approach.

Parents of children in receipt of early education funding receive details about the provision's education. The recent updating of the information about the Foundation Stage curriculum and the six areas of learning has resulted in clear and well-produced information for parents. Staff observe children during activities and use their notes to assess their achievements. Transferral of these to the children's developmental folders helps to maintain a clear record of educational progress. However, these folders are not freely available to parents and therefore, they do not look at them as a matter of course or on a regular basis. The manager is keen to share her knowledge and to involve parents further with their children's education and learning. The nursery is establishing open days and opportunities for parents to air their views and opinions. This ensures that children are cared for according to parents' wishes and provides continuity of care.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

A recent reorganisation of the environment has taken place. Staff have given thought to making best use of resources and the available space. As a result, children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. However, the layout of the downstairs area means that at times children do not mix freely. Children benefit from high staff ratios and children receive plenty of individual attention. Staff manage the routine effectively, but at times the flow of activities is disrupted because of the need to move on to the next activity. Written information and records relating to the children are in place, appropriately maintained and are available to parents. All mandatory

documents are in place, kept confidentially and regularly reviewed. Staff records, register and certificates of qualification are in place.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The registered person delegates full responsibility to the manager for the overall running of the nursery. The management have been proactive in seeking advice and making significant changes to the way the nursery operates. The new manager has a good management style where she works with her staff offering ongoing support. Staff are enthusiastic and open to new ideas and ways of working. They are beginning to identify their strengths and areas for improvement, both individually and as a team. The nursery demonstrates good commitment to continued improvement through induction of new staff, regular 1:1 sessions and appraisals. Meeting with the Early Years Advisory Teacher has given staff the confidence to discuss issues, gain support and consider their training needs. Consequently, this has improved staff knowledge of the Foundation stage and improved practice. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the provider was asked to improve the quality and standard of care through three recommendations:

A system for identifying nursery children when using the Imagine play centre has been partially addressed. Children now wear stickers when using the area. The provider is considering the use of t-shirts for clearer identification.

The play areas have now been reorganised to enable children to easily access toys and equipment. This has improved self-selection and ensures children make choices about what they play with.

The provision of resources that reflect diversity and disabilities has not been fully pursued and will be carried forward from this inspection.

At the last inspection the quality and standard of nursery education was judged as inadequate. The provider was given a notice of action to improve. The nursery has been proactive and is making good progress. They have taken the following actions:

Senior staff who have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage have encouraged other staff through in-house training and a mentoring system to have a clearer knowledge regarding the subject. External training is now booked and support and advice has been taken from the Early Years Advisory Teacher. This means that staff are now on track and beginning to use the Foundation Stage effectively.

Key workers in conjunction with the team leader record children's progress and development. These records now contain useful and relevant information, which helps staff to identify the next steps in children's learning.

Staff use the environment plans, children's records and individual stepping stones sheets to inform the short term planning. They have made sound progress in developing a system of planning which covers the six areas of learning. These show learning objectives and how activities can be extended to help children progress.

There is good progress regarding communication between staff and management. The new manager has taken positive steps to ensure that information is cascaded to all staff through induction, 1:1 sessions and appraisals. Staff are encouraged to consider their individual training needs and identify improvements which can be made by the whole team. This is achieved by informal discussion and during group and staff team meetings.

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):

- ensure children receive nutritious meals, which are adequate for their needs. In addition, consider ways for children to be more independent by helping in the preparation of meals and in pouring own drinks at meal times and after physical activity [also applies to nursery education]
- continue to develop the outside play area by ensuring babies have access to the area and providing more opportunities for older children to develop their skills and abilities [applies to both care and nursery education]
- carry out further risk assessment of the premises with regard to the sleeping arrangements for toddlers, the provision of additional shelving and the safety of the outside door to the garden
- ensure that children have access to activities and resources that provide positive images of culture, race, religion and disability

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):

- continue to develop staff knowledge and understanding of the Foundation stage to extend and support children's learning
- continue to develop the curriculum planning to ensure that all aspects of the six areas of learning are covered. In addition, ensure sufficient resources in the areas of Communication, Language and Literacy with regard to the provision of books and in the area of Creative development the provision of musical instruments
- develop resources to extend children's knowledge and understanding of the world with particular regard to finding out how things work, the use of programmable toys and discovering the environment and community about them
- consider ways to further involve parents in their children's achievements, progress and written records so that they can support their children's development and learning at home [also applies to care]

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