



Playdays Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	117216
Inspection date	06 October 2006
Inspector	Sara Jane Frost
Setting Address	6 Memory Lane, Plymstock, Plymouth, PL9 9GH
Telephone number	01752 403 312
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Registered person	Playdays Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?

Playdays Pre-School has been running in Plymstock Community Centre since 1975.

The group has use of the main hall and kitchen area at the community centre, as well as a patio area to the rear of the building. There are shops and a library close by. Plymouth city centre is a short distance away. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each week day from 09:15 to 12:00 during term time. On Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday a lunch club operates between 12:00 and 13:00 hours.

There are currently 28 children aged from two-and-a-half to under five years on roll. Of these, 20 children receive funding for early education. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning disabilities.

The committee that runs the community centre is also responsible for the pre-school and employing the staff. There are currently six part time members of staff employed. Of these four staff hold a NVQ3 equivalent and two staff members hold an NVQ2. The group is also supported by regular parent volunteers.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health and hygiene is promoted well by staff. Routines adopted on the whole maintain children's health however occasionally these routines are not always completed. By not consistently wiping down the tables before lunch for example, raises the risk of contamination.

Children's well being and safety is supported in an emergency as all parents give consent for staff to access first aid treatment and the setting always ensures at least one member of staff who holds the appropriate first aid training is present. Accident records are maintained and staff work with parents to ensure children's health is safeguarded. Parents are fully informed of any accidents that have occurred to the children, however, some details are recorded as an incident rather than an accident.

Children enjoy a range of nutritional foods, such as, fresh fruit, bread sticks, pitta bread and carrot sticks. Staff regularly talk with the children about healthy eating, this particularly happens during lunch. Parents provide children's packed lunches and staff encourage the children to eat their savoury items first. Children's independence is not always promoted as the drinks offered at snack time are already poured out into cups. However, children are given the opportunity to pour their own fresh drinking water from lidded jugs throughout the session.

There are opportunities for children to daily engage in a range of physical activities either indoors or outdoors depending on the weather. Children confidently use the large soft play mats as an assault course which helps develop their balancing and climbing skills. Every day the physical play activity is different, encouraging children's all round skills such as hand eye-coordination and gross motor skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Safety measures such as, gates, the hook and eye system across the main door are in place to deter other persons using the community hall access to the rooms the pre-school are using. Thus ensuring, children's safety is promoted. Visitors to the pre-school are asked to sign in. The pre-school and the community hall committee have had to reach a compromise over sharing the toilet facilities whilst the session is in operation. Staff are vigilant and check that no one else is using them before escorting children to use these facilities. They have sole use of both male and female toilets at a set time each day. There is also an accessible toilet on the premises.

Children have access to a good range of resources and equipment. Staff have to store equipment away at the end of each session. Equipment is rotated to ensure children have access to range. Some resources are stored in low level trolleys allowing children a degree of choice.

Children's risk of accidental injury is minimised because of staffs' awareness and understanding of potential hazards. Staff undertake regular risk assessments and conduct an additional risk assessment when using large physical. Fire drills are conducted regularly during each term. However, this is not the complete evacuation process as staff do not take children out of the building to the identified designated area. This limits staffs' and children's knowledge and awareness of what to do in a real emergency.

Children's welfare is promoted. Staff have a clear understanding of what constitutes a child protection issue. Although some staff are unsure of their responsibilities around reporting it they have clear guidance to refer to if needed and children remain safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff have a very good understanding of child development. They are beginning to use Birth to three matters when planning activities and observing younger children. Staff regularly ask open ended questions, help develop children's language skills. All children have the opportunity to play and mix together throughout the session. At story time for example children are split into two age groups. This helps children benefit from suitable grouping.

Staff have developed a good relationship with the children, they are valued and listened too. Children within the pre-school are confident, happy and chat freely to adults present. Staff regularly take an interest in the children by asking them questions and giving children time to answer. Children enjoy singing the 'welcome' and 'goodbye' song especially, the latter as they wave their friends off.

Teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have developed a good understanding of the Foundation Stage. They are for example, aware of how children learn and what they are expected to gain from the activities. The planning covers all six areas of learning and clearly identifies the stepping stones. The balance of adult led child initiated activities is good. There are times however, when the more able child is not challenged for example, at welcome time when discussing number of the week, no further challenges were set for children who were clearly able to recognise the number '5'. Staff do not always engage children appropriately. They allowed for example, a child to 'flit' from activity to activity for period of time unnoticed. This impacts on their learning.

Assessments and regular observations are now in place. However, baseline assessments which are conducted with the parents when children commence at the pre-school are not used as part of the planning process so the knowledge that is gained is not used to its full advantage.

All children are welcomed into the pre-school. The allocated member of staff responsible for Special Educational Needs has attended various training courses. As a result of clear advice all staff, are able to provide suitable educational support.

Children enter the building with ease many eagerly to search out their own friends. They begin their day at pre-school at 'welcome' time. As a group they discuss 'number, letter and colour of the week' and 'pre-school rules'. At times it is difficult for staff to be heard as conversations are being held else where across the hall.

Children are being encouraged to develop pencil control; by providing named cards children are encouraged to write their own names on their pieces of work. However, this is not consistent throughout the activities, for example, staff do not allow children the opportunity of writing their names on their art work. By not providing writing materials in the home corner for example, children are not given the opportunity to independently scribe. Letter of the week encourages children to associate sounds, for example 'e' for ear, egg. The introduction at story time of 'lamb chop' a hand puppet, helps children to understand that books are special, and chewing pages, for example is not a good thing to do .

Children enjoy craft activities; some children were able to understand the concept of mixing two colours together and achieving a different colour. Other children understood the concept of different shades of the same colour. Children enjoy dressing up, moving around the hall making 'clicking' noises in their play shoes. The children that accessed the sensory tray enjoyed looking for items in the sawdust.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children come from a variety of backgrounds; their individual needs are met by the staff. Planning shows children are beginning to celebrate different festivals throughout the year. They are for example, provided with opportunities to taste and become familiar with different cultural foods. This helps children develop some understanding of and a positive attitude towards others. Children are generally well behaved and polite, saying excuse me, please and thank you at the appropriate times and reminded gently by staff if they forget. They learn to respect each other through playing and sharing together. Children are beginning to understand routines for example, the introduction of the 'maraca and egg timer' for example, makes children aware that it will soon be tidy up time for everyone. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff work hard to support children with Specific Educational Needs. The designated member of staff has good knowledge and regard to the Code of Practice for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs and is able to offer support and guidance to all, ensuring every child's need is being met.

Parents report positively about how the setting has improved since the new manager has taken over. They have been encouraged to take an active part in the re-organisation of the pre-school through use of a parental questionnaire. Parents and carers are kept informed of any changes that take place, for example, the outcomes of the questionnaire by newsletters. Any complaints made are suitably recorded and are available for all parents to access.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory; they receive information about education programme. The plans are displayed in entrance, for example 'the number, colour and letter of

the week'. The pre-school at the end of last term introduced one to one meetings with parents and carers to discuss their child's progress, this was particularly aimed at the parent's whose children were leaving to go to school at the end of term. Although all children are allocated a key worker when they commence attending the pre-school, some parents, are unaware their child has a designated key worker, or the purpose of the role within the setting. This limits good links between the two environments.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from being cared for in an organised environment. The rota system and operational plan ensures all staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and work well together. This underpins the smooth running of the setting. All staff hold the appropriate child care qualifications and attend short courses to up date their knowledge. All the required documentation is readily available. Staff files are available detailing qualifications and suitability checks. However, at present there is no formal way such as staff appraisals, for checking the on going suitability of staff. The person in charge has been employed at the pre-school for a couple years and knows the staff well but, has only recently this year taken on the role of manager. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff are managed by the community hall committee, with the overall day to day responsibility resting with the manager. Following the previous inspection there has been changes made with regard to staffs' role and responsibilities. The new manager is aware of the settings strengths and weaknesses and has learnt to delegate particular responsibilities to staff. Staff make good use of support and advice from agencies, such as the Early Years Advisory Team to develop and improve on all areas of their practice. Regular staff meetings are organised to discuss children's progress, needs, evaluation of planning and any other issues.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the provider was asked to ensure all children using large equipment are suitably supervised, to devise an action plan demonstrating how children will receive greater access to resources that promote difference and diversity and ensure that a procedure for dealing with an allegation of abuse against a member of staff is included in the child protection policy. At the last nursery education inspection staff were asked to improve the organisation of all sessions, improve the curriculum delivery, and teaching strategies and develop the evaluation of adult practice.

Risk assessments are completed every time large physical equipment is used and staff are deployed to ensure children's safety is not compromised. A member of staff has been given overall responsibility for equal opportunities, additional resources have been purchased, and further promotion of difference and diversity has been incorporated within the planned programme. The manager has reviewed and updated the settings child protection policy which now includes a procedure for dealing with an allegation of abuse made against a member of staff. The hall and the pre-school sessions has been re-organised, including the ceasing of the Wednesday afternoon session. Staff are deployed effectively, within the main hall, children are

suitably grouped at specific times throughout the session and the kitchen area is now only used for occasional planned activities. The planned educational programme has been further developed and now provides an even balanced curriculum in all six areas of learning. Staff regularly evaluate the planned activities offered.

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 the parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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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):

- further develop snack time to allow children to become more independent
- ensure all table surfaces are clean before distributing food and the recording of accidents and incidents are recorded appropriately
- develop the fire practice to ensure children are fully aware of the evacuation process

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):

- further develop planning to build on and include baseline assessments
- provide further opportunities for children to independently scribe and ensure more able children are suitably challenged
- develop further links with parents to ensure parents are aware of key worker roles and their children's progress throughout the year.

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