



Royal Mail Childsplay Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	131731
Inspection date	09 January 2007
Inspector	Chris Banks
Setting Address	Mount Pleasant Mail Centre, Farringdon Road, London, EC1A 1BB
Telephone number	020 7239-2209
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Registered person	Kiddycare Limited
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Childs Play Nursery for children aged between three months and five years was registered in 1998. It is operated by a small private company on behalf of Royal Mail who provide child care for employees based at a sorting office in the EC1 area of Islington. The setting is open all year round and runs Monday to Friday from 06:00 - 22:00. Children's attendance is based around the shift patterns of working parents. The setting is registered to care for a maximum of 29 children at any one time. There are currently 25 children on roll. This includes 11 children who receive funding for nursery education.

The setting employs a team of nine staff, eight of whom hold recognised qualifications in early years childcare.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in clean and suitably maintained surroundings. They are well protected from the risk of infection because staff have clear written health procedures in place. These are effectively put into practice in all areas which includes feeding, nappy changing and general cleaning.

Older children are learning good self care skills. They understand why hand washing is important at certain times and are also familiar with the good practice of brushing their teeth after meals. Children benefit from the clear sickness policy of the nursery and staff act in the children's best interest if they become ill. Staff take good precautions to ensure children do not return to the Nursery before they are well and only administer prescribed medication to children under supervised conditions. Four staff hold valid first aid certificates which means they are also well prepared in the event of an accident or emergency. First aid supplies, however, are not easily accessible as key holders are in another part of the building.

Children enjoy a reasonably well balanced diet whilst in the care of the Nursery. Main meals normally include two green vegetables and they are also quite culturally varied. Good hygiene practice is used by staff to serve the hot meals which are delivered by a contractor. Snacks are nutritious and always include various fruits.

Children do not enjoy sufficient access to fresh air and exercise each day because there is no regular programme of outdoor or physical activities in place. This limits their ability to learn about the importance of physical activity in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Interior space in the nursery is also limited but children do have some opportunities to extend themselves physically during free play and circle time. Children are becoming confident in developing their fine motor skills as they engage in creative activities which involve cutting and manipulating fine brushes and pencils.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are looked after in safe surroundings and enjoy the security of being cared for by a staff team who have good safety awareness. Arrangements for the arrival and collection of children are well managed because procedures include double checking the identity of all nominated carers and visitors who are required to sign in.

Children are supervised vigilantly because staff are well deployed across the setting. Any potential risks are effectively monitored and safety arrangements are reviewed on a regular basis. This is to ensure fire safety precautions in particular are in line with Royal Mail requirements. Other good routine safety procedures such as closely monitoring sleeping babies and children also helps to minimise risks.

Children are further protected because staff are well informed about their role and responsibility in safeguarding their welfare. They are familiar with the process of monitoring, recording and reporting child protection concerns and are guided by up to date written procedures. The role of Ofsted is made clear and procedures also include action to take if any allegations are made against staff.

Children enjoy playing with a good range of safe, clean and well maintained toys and equipment suitable for their ages and stages of development. These are checked on a regular basis and staff gently remind children about the importance of using equipment in a safe way.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All age groups of children are happy and content because they benefit from being cared for by staff who are mostly caring and attentive. Children look forward to coming to the nursery because they are warmly greeted and made to feel welcome. They separate well from parents and carers and quickly settle into activities and daily routines. Babies who are new to the nursery are also settling in well because staff are forming close bonds and are familiar with their individual needs. They are held warmly and comfortably whilst feeding and show confidence in the staff who care for them.

Children benefit from staff's growing understanding of the Birth to three matters framework which is already developing into some good childcare practice for children aged under three years. They are well supported and are positively encouraged to explore their surroundings and experience a range of stimulating activities.

Older children are well integrated with younger children. Toddlers are actively encouraged to socialise with other age groups at certain times during the day. This makes for a more smooth transition when they are ready to move to another room on a more long term basis. They are introduced to new staff by their key worker who also passes on their observations and development records.

Children have access to some good quality early learning toys and equipment. They are not always able to freely help themselves because some of the low levels storage is blocked by other items of equipment and furniture.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making steady progress in their learning because staff are developing their knowledge of the Foundation Stage and plan a suitable range of activities for children. Children's progress is regularly monitored and some good observations are made by staff. They do not always however effectively plan for children's individual next steps because there is no systematic way of assessing their progress and plans do not effectively cover all areas of learning.

Children play happily and comfortably alongside their peers and are learning to co operate well with each other. They are encouraged to consider the feelings of others and behave in a

respectful way towards staff and other children. Older children are considerate and welcoming towards the younger age group and readily share space and resources.

Children have a growing confidence to express themselves individually and in groups. They happily chatter together at lunchtime and are confident to ask staff for a seat next to their friend. After lunch they readily help tidy away and prepare for their nap.

During story time, children attentively listen to staff and are familiar with most story lines. They often predict the outcome before the final page and enjoy sharing this with the staff member who congratulates them on their good memory. They also occasionally spend time looking at books independently. They are relaxed and attentive during circle time and also remember the words of rhymes and action songs very well.

Everyday routines sometime incorporate wider learning opportunities for children. For example, at snack time children count the pieces of fruit on each plate and also discuss it's shape and colour with staff. They are also learning to identify simple word formations as older children successfully note their place names at the lunch table.

Writing skills are being developed as children work in small groups to form letters and numbers in 'work books'. At times the activity is overly directed by staff and children become rather restless. When children paint, they express themselves freely and enjoy experimenting. Children also enjoy using their imaginations during role play as they dress up, use glove puppets and play 'house'

Children have some opportunities to broaden their understanding of the wider world. Knowledge of their immediate community is extended as they enjoy making regular visits to the local fire station which is located very close by. Occasional visits are also made to Coram Fields where children can experience how farm animals are cared for. Children also take part once a year in a sponsored 'toddle' for charity which involves meeting children from other settings.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are developing confidence and self esteem. They are respected by staff and older children are confident to share their views and feelings. They show care and consideration to each other and rarely have disagreements. Children behave well because staff encourage good co operation and manage their behaviour in a way that is appropriate for their age and understanding.

A good range of anti discriminatory toys and equipment help children acknowledge difference and learn more about the world around them. They also learn about the traditions of others by sharing different cultural festivals and celebrating key events in the world calendar. Children are encouraged to take pride in their backgrounds and activities during Black History month helps older children acknowledge the achievements of others. There are systems in place and links with other agencies to ensure children with disabilities are integrated and supported. A collective approach helps foster children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Partnership with parents is good. They are actively encouraged to be involved in their child's learning and most are given direct information about the curriculum. A parents notice board and activity programmes displayed in each room also outlines plans for the future. Parents are kept suitably informed about their child's progress. They receive regular written reports and are actively encouraged to meet with their child's key worker. Parents of younger children also receive daily update sheets on their child's food and fluid intake, sleeping patterns and nappy changing routines. If parents are unhappy about any aspect of the service there is a formal complaints procedure but it requires further development. They are also able to voice any concerns during parent meetings which are held a few times a year.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The leadership and management of the setting is satisfactory with arrangements in place to ensure it is effectively led during staff absence. Children benefit from being cared for by a suitably qualified and experienced staff team who are clear about their roles and responsibilities. There is an ongoing commitment to train staff with a clear development programme in place for 2007.

There is an awareness of the settings strengths and weaknesses. The nursery is in the process of undergoing a full self evaluation against each National Standard and shows a commitment to improving the overall quality of service. Staff are developing a knowledge of the Foundation Stage and make some sound observations of children's progress but as yet are not clearly planning for all children's next steps. Children under three years benefit from a good understanding of the Birth to three matters framework which means their overall development is well supported.

The environment is comfortable and quite welcoming with sufficient space for the number of children the nursery is registered to care for. Rooms used by children are reasonably well organised but space is restricted and some areas are well worn. Toys and equipment are not made sufficiently accessible to children which means their free choice is limited. Documentation is very well organised and stored confidentially. Systems are also in place to ensure records, policies and procedures are regularly updated.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection, the provider was required to further develop written child protection procedures to ensure they include the process to follow if any allegations are made against staff. There is now additional guidance contained in procedures. This helps ensure the welfare of children is suitably safeguarded.

In line with a further recommendation made at the last inspection, there is also now a staff register which clearly records their attendance.

Complaints 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.

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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):

- ensure supplies of first aid are made easily accessible to staff
- further develop the complaints procedure and ensure a log is kept which parents can see on request.
- ensure early learning toys and equipment are made more easily accessible to children

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):

- extend the curriculum to ensure it includes planned opportunities for children to engage in physical exercise and outdoor play
- develop a systematic approach to assessing the progress of individual children and use this to plan their next steps

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