

# Playaway Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	404928
<b>Inspection date</b>	27 September 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Sandra Daniels
<b>Setting Address</b>	Stifford Parish Hall, Crammavill Street, GRAYS, Essex, RM16 2BA
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<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

Playaway Pre-school opened in 1975. It operates from the Stifford Parish Hall in Grays. The Pre-school serves the local area.

There are currently 75 children on roll. This includes 65 funded three and four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports a small number of children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times from 09.15 until 12.00 and Monday, Thursday and Friday from 12.45 until 15.15.

There are 10 members of staff working with the children; eight members of staff have early years qualifications and two members of staff are currently on training programmes.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in an environment that is clean and bright. They begin to learn the importance of good hygiene through the daily routine and they learn about the importance of minimising the spread of germs through regular hand washing. Children know why and when they should wash their hands, for example, children say they need to 'get rid of germs' as they wash their hands after using the toilet. In addition, the use of liquid soap and paper towels contributes to minimising the risk of cross-infection. Children develop independence as they confidently take themselves to the toilet to attend to their personal needs. Visual clues displayed in the hand washing areas helps to remind children to wash their hands thoroughly, to prevent germs from hurting their tummies.

Children learn about healthy eating because snack time is well organised and affords children good opportunities to enjoy a variety of healthy snacks and fruit that is good for them. In addition, children are able to enjoy fresh milk or water with their snack, contributing to their good health. Staff ensure that snack foods cover the main food groups and are varied and interesting for children. Children are able to access fresh drinking water freely during the session, helping them to learn the importance of keeping their bodies hydrated. Information relating to children's dietary requirements, preferences and allergies is collated. As a result, children's good health is safeguarded. A sick child policy, clear accident procedures and staff's up-to-date first aid training means that they can act in the best interests of children in the event of a medical emergency or an accident.

Children receive very good opportunities to participate in activities to promote their large muscle movements both inside and outdoors; this includes riding bikes, ball games, running freely, climbing apparatus and music and movement. As a result, children develop a healthy attitude to exercise and they are beginning to learn about changes that occur in their bodies as they embark on vigorous physical play.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

The pre-school provides a welcoming environment for children, parents and visitors. Clear information is placed on notice boards and children's creations are displayed on the walls helping to give them a sense of belonging and achievement. Children and parents are greeted warmly by staff. They freely access the wide range of attractive, well-maintained play equipment and resources. A range of child-height furniture enables children to extend their play and learning in safety and comfort. The very good organisation of the play space along with thorough daily checks of all child-accessible areas ensures the environment remains safe for children. Toys and resources are regularly checked and cleaned so they remain in good condition for the children to use. The provision of child accessible storage encourages children to extend their own play and learning. Staff support children very well, encouraging them to tidy away when they have finished playing, thereby keeping the play space free from tripping hazards and helping children to learn about the importance of doing things for themselves.

Regular practise of the fire drill ensures all children are familiar with procedures to follow in the event of an emergency. In addition, fire extinguishers are checked regularly. As a result, risks to children are identified and minimised promptly, contributing to their welfare and safety.

Procedures for recording accidents are good and ensure parents are informed promptly. Children's welfare is further protected as staff have a good awareness of child protection issues. Staff have attended recent training on safeguarding children, therefore, ensuring they have an up-to-date knowledge and understanding of the correct procedure to follow should there be any child protection concerns. Comprehensive policies and procedures have been devised for staff to follow.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

The carefully prepared and well-organised environment helps children to settle quickly. Parents are welcome to spend as long as they wish or need to ensure their child is fully settled and comfortable in this environment. As a result, children are keen to embark on a broad range of interesting activities that encourage and promote all areas of development and stimulate their interests. Staff know the children extremely well, they show kindness towards them and are caring and sensitive in their approach. As a result, children are keen to try new ideas, and make effective use of the toys and resources. Children's self-esteem and confidence is enhanced because the staff praise and encourage them in their play, expressing delight in their achievements. Children interact well, demonstrating kindness and consideration to others as they play collaboratively. They talk and respond with animation and laughter to the staff and their peers. Staff use effective questioning techniques to engage the children and encourage them to talk and explore language. Open questions extend children's thinking and help children to reflect on what they are doing and what will happen next.

Younger children aged under three years clearly enjoy using a range of malleable resources such as sand and play dough which promote a good range of skills. Children participate enthusiastically in a range of indoor and outdoor activities that are age-appropriate. However, as the group does not have its own dedicated outside play area, opportunities for outside play are somewhat limited, reducing children's access to daily fresh air. Activities and resources are organised for them in advance and they are able to choose from what is on offer. They are able to move freely between activities, making independent choices about their play and learning. Staff offer support and supervision wherever needed and children benefit from the positive interaction they receive, for example, at 'circle time'. This is because they are in large group situations for short periods of time. There are opportunities for children to be independent during the session, for example, at tidy up time, when having their snack and when using the toilet.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children have opportunities to participate in a wide range of activities to enable them to progress through the stepping stones. Staff have very good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and plan well for children with an excellent range and balance of activities. The activities and experiences provided cover each area of learning and meet the individual needs of the children. The teaching provides good levels of interaction and staff make good use of planned and naturally occurring situations to challenge and extend the children's learning. Clear and very well presented long, medium and short term planning is effective. For example, the short term planning clearly identifies learning intentions and monitors and evaluates if learning objectives have been achieved. This helps staff recognise where they are successful in promoting learning and where aspects require improvements. Although staff are competent at adapting or extending activities in order to meet the needs of each child, this is not clearly identified in the planning. Staff observe and record children's

progress across the areas of learning. Information gained from these assessments is used to influence future planning, to help children move on to the next steps in their learning.

Children are keen to participate in the range of activities provided and are encouraged to independently select resources and initiate their own activities and games. Their independence is very much encouraged. They help to pour drinks at snack time and help to clear away the toys at the end of each session. Children are very polite and cooperative. They willingly take turns and follow simple instructions. Children show a strong sense of belonging as they greet staff and each other upon arrival. Children develop good self-esteem and are confident and eager to learn. Children become increasingly independent when dealing with their own physical needs. For example, they know where to put their belongings such as coats and bags and are confident at helping themselves to snack when they are hungry. Children take the initiative to be self-sufficient in their learning because they have access to equipment and resources stored at their level.

Practitioners appreciate that children's social, emotional and educational needs are central to any transition between one setting and another. Older children attend the village school for two sessions each week as part of a joint early years programme. Children's needs are well met and there is continuity in their learning as there is extremely effective communication between both settings.

There is an excellent range of books within the setting, and children clearly enjoy listening to stories and know how to use the books correctly. Books are set out in a stimulating way which increases children's enjoyment and interest. Children eagerly look forward to sharing new stories with a grandparent or one of the children who innovatively brings stories to life for them as they anticipate what might happen next. Children have very good opportunities within the setting to mark, make and write for different purposes in the context of role play. For example, children enjoy using the notebooks provided to take orders in the restaurant and to make shopping lists for the food. Children receive good opportunities to build up a repertoire of songs that they sing with vigour and enjoyment, both spontaneously and during planned sessions. In addition, children are able to recall songs with clues provided by staff during group time.

Children take part in lots of activities that support them to develop in their mathematical development. Children are developing recognition of numbers and can count to 20 and beyond. For example, children enjoy counting how many children and adults are present at registration time and how many pieces of a puzzle make up a whole puzzle. When asking children how many stars you can see in the sky at night time, a child replies 'a hundred'. The practitioner says she thinks there may be more than that and another child suggests 'one hundred and one'. They recognise shapes and use appropriate language when looking at different shades of colours and they are able to distinguish between lighter and darker shades of colour. They also really enjoy making cakes where they are able to look at quantity, and are given the opportunity to measure, weigh and count out the ingredients. Children eagerly join in number rhymes and songs and use real objects to solve problems such as addition and subtraction.

Children receive good opportunities to explore with their senses and have regular access to a range of malleable materials, for example, play dough is provided daily with a variety of tools and materials to extend children's imagination. The celebrations of festivals from around the world provide children with opportunities to learn about other cultures, beliefs and traditions. They are beginning to gain an understanding of time and children talk about what they have

done and at registration time they discuss the seasons, weather, and months of the year and days of the week.

Children enjoy a range of physical activities which help them to develop their confidence and skill as they move around safely. They demonstrate sound coordination and control while using large apparatus. For example, they confidently balance on wooden planks and negotiate obstacle courses. Children develop their fine manipulative skills as they use single handed tools and utensils with increasing competence. They are beginning to learn about the importance of physical exercise and how it can help them to stay fit and healthy. Children express their individual creativity through a satisfactory range of craft activities. For example, they freely paint and create pictures, some of which are displayed around the setting. Children enjoy experimenting with different textures as they paint their hands to print pictures or squeeze and knead play dough. They develop their games based on real and imagined experiences as they encourage others to play babies in role play games. Staff work closely as a team, praising and encouraging children to develop their personal independence and support learning.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely happy and settled within the group. Staff are readily available at the beginning of sessions to support any children who may need help to settle. As a result, children come very happily into the group and become quickly involved in the ready-prepared activities. Younger children are developing an awareness of themselves and finding out what they can do. They are developing confidence in their physical skills and are secure emotionally, enabling them to express their needs.

Children's behaviour is extremely good. They have a clear understanding of the boundaries of behaviour and are developing a sound understanding of right and wrong. Staff manage children's behaviour exceptionally well and give clear, age-appropriate explanations to help the children develop self-control. Children receive lots of praise and encouragement from the staff. They feel highly valued because staff take the time to listen to them and notice the good things they have done.

Children are valued as individuals, treated with great respect and encouraged to show kindness and respect to one another. Children learn about differences in lifestyle, culture, belief, tradition and the wider world through the celebration of festivals from around the world. In addition, children have access to a range of resources that reflect diversity in a positive way, these include books, dolls and puzzles. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. The provision has an extremely positive approach to caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Practitioners work in partnership with parents and other professionals to ensure their specific needs are met. Such children receive excellent individual support and are making very good progress towards reaching their potentials.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents are extremely happy with the care provided by the setting. They are greeted warmly by practitioners who are extremely approachable and friendly. The parents of children who receive nursery education benefit from a two-way sharing of information between parents and staff to enhance their children's learning. In addition, regular newsletters ensure parents are kept updated with important information relating to the daily operation of the setting. Parents know they can see their children's developmental records at any time and also have regular appointments to discuss specific issues. They receive a pack containing relevant and clear information about the Foundation Stage

curriculum. As a result, parents are extremely well informed of their children's educational programme. Practitioners skilfully extend children's learning into the home as parents become involved in 'firm foundations' activities with their children outside pre-school hours. Parents' views are highly valued and acted on, so that they feel fully involved in their child's learning and development.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Overall children's needs are met. All regulatory policies and procedures are in place and updated as required. Systems for recording the arrival and departure times of children and staff are in place to ensure they are safely accounted for at all times. Staff employment procedures are robust to ensure children remain protected from harm.

Children are cared for by staff who have a very good knowledge and understanding of child development. The majority of staff hold relevant early years qualifications. Clear staff induction procedures are in place and monitoring systems such as appraisals and staff meetings are implemented to support new and existing members of staff. Attention to ongoing professional development enables staff to keep their practice up to date. Clear development plans are in place and discussed with members of staff and the feeder primary school to increase opportunities for children. All policies and procedures are implemented in practice to promote positive outcomes for children and ensure the nursery runs smoothly.

Leadership and management is good. The manager is very enthusiastic and committed in her approach to providing children with good early years care and learning. All practitioners are highly valued and are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities because they are provided with clear messages and support. Staff have yearly appraisals in which training needs are identified. The staff team are given the opportunity to influence the day to day practice with their ideas for activities. As a result, staff are highly motivated and show genuine enthusiasm and love for their work with the children.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the provider agreed some recommendations regarding the safety of children. The provider agreed to review some policies and procedures and to ensure that heater guards were made safe. Children's safety is given high priority in this setting. The heater guards are fully secured to the walls and policies such as uncollected children, safeguarding children, complaints, managing behaviour and outings have all been reviewed, updated and shared with parents. They work in practice to promote the safety of children.

The provider also agreed to ensure that the operational plan includes recruitment procedures, staff appraisal information and procedures for responding to parental feedback. These things are now included in the operational plan and all parental feedback is appropriately addressed, either personally or through a newsletter.

## **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 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):

- further develop opportunities for children to play outside.

#### **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 differentiation in planning to ensure that focussed activities and topics challenge individual children effectively.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)