



Lets Play Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	509372
Inspection date	07 February 2007
Inspector	Teresa Marie Taylor
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Registered person	Susan Lorraine Belfield
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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet 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?

Lets Play Nursery was registered in 1995 and is a privately owned business. The nursery is situated in a residential area of the Hall Green area of Birmingham and can be easily accessed from Acocks Green, Olton and Solihull. The accommodation consists of two converted adjoining shops. The main nursery is situated in one building and comprises of two play areas on the ground floor and two rooms on the first floor. The baby unit is situated on the ground floor of the second premises. A maximum of 37 children may attend at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07:30 to 18:00 50 weeks a year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 44 children on roll. Of these, nine receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area and attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The nursery employs 14 staff. Of these 12 hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The nursery also offer a before and after school care and escort service for children attending Robin Hood Junior & Infant School.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

Children in the main nursery learn about good personal hygiene through the daily routine and the examples shown by staff. Although younger children are escorted to the toilet, self-care is encouraged and children are reminded to wash their hands before and after meals, after playing outside and after messy activities. Generally most staff take positive steps to help prevent the spread of infection by ensuring the rooms are kept clean and discussing the reasons for good hygiene with the children. Although, the procedures for cleaning after lunch time in both the baby room and eighteen months to 3 years rooms do not protect children from cross-infection as cleaning takes place around the children. The babies are exposed to the risks of cross-infection as there are poor procedures and routines in place in the baby unit. Children are protected if they become ill as staff follow clear sickness and exclusion procedures and have access to a list of reportable, communicable diseases. Staff record accidents and ensure parental consent is in place prior to administering prescribed medication ensuring children are given appropriate care when they become unwell.

Older children have a positive attitude to physical activity. They play outside each day, weather permitting, with a range of outdoor play equipment, which promotes their co-ordination and physical development. They also have regular physical play sessions in the pre-school unit including music and movement activities. Older children receive good attention and support from the staff in developing their spatial awareness and children understand why exercise and fresh air is good for them. The youngest children are not provided with opportunities to run, explore the outside environment, use sit and ride toys or to develop gross and fine motor skills.

Nutritional snacks are offered daily which encourages the children to develop healthy eating habits. There is a set snack time when children are offered fruit, vegetables, biscuits, cereals and a choice of milk or water. Children in the main unit have free access to water at all times and develop their understanding of remaining hydrated as staff encourage discussion on healthy growth and development. There are posters and regular discussions on healthy eating. This has given the older children a good understanding of healthy food and why it is good for them.

Children in the main nursery are free to decide what they wish to eat from the meal provided. There is always a vegetarian option, providing the meal is not totally vegetarian when no option is available. Babies that are fully weaned have all their food placed in one bowl and if they don't want it there is no option available. Babies bottles are not always made up appropriately and therefore babies may not be receiving either enough milk or appropriate nutrition during the day.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Children are generally kept safe and secure within the nursery. Staff are mostly vigilant in the main nursery and are aware of where the children are at all times. Children are provided with a range of safe and suitable toys and equipment but access to them is often restricted. Children's independence and choice is not promoted effectively. Furniture is of a suitable design and conforms to safety standards within the main nursery. The baby room has no domestic style furniture and staff sit on the floor to feed and comfort babies. The environment is not maintained to protect children as there are several areas with large quantities of exposed staples and damaged plaster work.

Older children are praised for their care and consideration for each other which develops their self-esteem. Younger children are not provided with sufficient guidance to encourage understanding of risks or the effects of their behaviour on others. Children's risk of accidental injury is not always minimised as although staff conduct daily checks to reduce potential hazards, they are not sufficiently observant of children's behaviour or the environment. The outside play area is fully enclosed and secure ensuring children are usually safe when playing outdoors.

Children learn about fire safety as the evacuation procedure is displayed, discussed, practised regularly and recorded. This ensures children understand the routine and could safely exit the nursery if the alarms sounded. Staff develop older children's awareness of safety as they give clear explanations, for example, 'don't run as you may bump into someone, keep the scissors on the table as they are sharp and may cut someone'. All main doors are locked, there is CCTV and a record of visitors is maintained. This ensures children are kept safe from intruders. The welfare of children is given high priority in the main nursery and accident and medication records are in place, up to date and countersigned by parents.

Children in the pre-school unit are well protected as staff are familiar with child protection procedures and are very aware of each child. Children are mostly safeguarded because there is a designated child protection officer who understands the local guidance on child protection. Some staff in the rest of the nursery are not familiar with the nursery procedures, although these are discussed and recorded on the staff induction record. This leaves the youngest and most vulnerable children at possible risk. Parents are provided with basic information on child protection but the nursery statement does not meet the Standards or provide accurate contact details. There is no information regarding what action the nursery would take if there were allegations about staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is inadequate.

Older children are very happy, confident, sociable and enthusiastic on arrival at nursery and eager to join their peers. There are secure and trusting relationships between children and the staff. Pre-school children have an excellent attitude and are engaged in a good range of activities throughout the day. Staff know children's personalities very well and they are clear about how to support their individual needs. This ensures all pre-school children receive appropriate care and attention. They enjoy their time spent in planned or free choice activities.

Children are independent in most aspects of their care, learning and indoor play. They are excited by the opportunities offered to them and join in with enthusiasm. They acquire good dexterity as they learn to build with construction toys and a wide range of creative activities. Staff plan and provide a good range of stimulating activities and constructively implement the 'Birth to three matters' framework which contributes to positive outcomes for children.

Children in the baby unit and 18 months to 3 years are not offered a suitable range of play opportunities and are often bored and argumentative as a result. Although there is a very good range of toys and equipment available children do not have access to them. The structure of the rooms and organisation of the day affects children's freedom of choice, their ability to explore, investigate and sustain interesting activities. The staff understand the principals of Birth to three matters but are not implementing them effectively.

The older children remain in their key group at all times so are prevented from forming opinions about, and relationships with, the remaining children that attend. They are not free to choose where they play as they have set times to be in each room. This means children can not extend their play or experiment in combining activities, for example, reading books in the home play area. Staff did not respond appropriately to children's boredom and arguments over dolls.

Babies are expected to sit for long periods and are offered very few opportunities for physical development. Staff did not respond appropriately to babies non verbal communication and offered few opportunities for exploration or discovery. Toys and equipment were restricted and babies had the same few items for most of the day. Even when older babies attempted to access equipment they were prevented. Poor use is made of the rear baby room with access restricted at all times. Babies growing independence, mobility and need to assert themselves is not supported or encouraged.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are progressing well through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. They are comfortable in their surroundings and respond well to the staff and each other. The room is bright and attractive with many good displays of children's work. Children are excited and eager to use the activities set out for them and show confidence as they select what they wish to do or join in planned activities.

Children benefit from the good understanding and knowledge staff have of the stepping stones and the Foundation Stage. This is evident in the planning which covers all the areas of learning, and the understanding staff have of what children are learning from play and activities. All staff are involved with planning and good use is made of observations and assessments to ensure children's individual needs are met.

The present routine provides a suitable range and variety of daily activities and therefore children are able to extend and consolidate learning. They use mathematical language well, comparing how many bears are in the story, and what their size is, regularly counting and subtracting, for example, how many plates do we need for snack, how many more, how many chairs. Children develop a respect for each other and property, as staff encourage good manners, consideration and cooperation, such as when the children help to tidy up. Children have a busy

routine and behave well. They are offered many opportunities to become involved with daily routines, extending their independence and make informed choices.

Children appreciate the variety of books available to them and they are learning how to use books for facts and for stories. They enjoy looking at books on their own and as a group, treating the books carefully. Staff display good skills at extending the children's vocabulary as they encourage discussion in all activities including snack and meal times. Speaking and listening skills are a priority and children speak confidently telling their news to the group and recalling previous events with 'Bertie Bear'. They are encouraged to use a tape recorder both for working out who is talking and also to record and play back their own voice. They are learning to be considerate when listening to others. Clear labelling throughout the room ensures that the children are developing good letter recognition and early reading skills. They recognise their own names and other children's names. Children have some opportunities to develop writing skills and develop their understanding of the use of writing but staff do not sufficiently encourage children to use pencils and pens both for writing and making marks. Staff adapt planning and learning to meet the needs of the individual child, ensuring that children with learning difficulties are given appropriate consideration, opportunities and support.

Children are encouraged to concentrate on activities and are proud of their achievements. They are developing independence and have good self-esteem. Staff praise and encourage the children frequently, and they are happy and comfortable in the learning environment. Staff make good use of time and resources and use their observations to evaluate their teaching and the children's learning. They have a good understanding of behaviour management using a quiet, calm and consistent approach to which the children respond very well.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is inadequate.

Children have unequal access to the range of resources and activities. Older children are treated as individuals by staff, who ensure activities are suited to children's specific levels of understanding and ability. There are reasonable working relationships with both parents and outside agencies which means each child's abilities and needs have been recorded, documented and are regularly assessed. This ensures older children, including those with special educational needs, have their care and learning needs met. Children under three do not have sufficient attention paid to their individual needs and are therefore not progressing or learning as well as they could. Positive relationships are formed and children work extremely well together, in the pre-school unit, sharing and taking turns. They are well behaved, listen to others with interest and welcome visitors into the setting in a confident and polite manner. Through the well-planned topics, children have many opportunities to engage in activities which enhance their learning and understanding of the wider community and the world around them. Children under three are given restricted access to resources and this means they often struggle with peer group interaction and personal development. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not fostered.

Older children's behaviour is good as staff provide a positive environment, are consistent, use praise and encouragement freely and are calm in their approach to the children. Younger children do not receive the same consistent or committed approach and often struggle with

personal relationships and development of how their behaviour affects others. There is a written behaviour management policy which works well and is fully understood and implemented by the staff in the pre-school unit. The children contribute to discussions on behaviour, in pre-school, on the differences and similarities that affect how everyone interacts with each other. This gives children a sense of ownership and encourages responsibility for their actions.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. They are kept informed of their child's progress and development through daily exchange of information and by invitation to more formal meetings with staff to discuss their child's progress through the year. Newsletters are provided for parents and carers regularly and give detailed information about forthcoming events and themes. Parents are invited to talks on how to support their children both at home and in nursery. They are invited to be part of their child's day by, helping at nursery or joining a parent's rota. They are invited to become involved with their children's learning. All plans are displayed in the pre-school unit and are linked to the stepping stones. This gives parents a picture of what the nursery has planned, what they are offering the children and why. Planning and activities are not as well displayed in the under three's rooms and a poor understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' means children are not offered the opportunities and experiences to enable them to develop independence.

A parent pack is given to all parents and includes the philosophy of the nursery and policy statements. The child protection statement and information on making a complaint do not meet the Standards. Parents complete registration forms for all children with staff ensuring parents are aware of the consents required to provide a safe environment.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

The nursery is not well organised at present and more consideration has been given to controlling access to play areas and less to an environment which effectively fosters children's development. Space and resources are poorly organised in the under three's areas but, well organised in the pre-school unit with staff in pre-school committed to ensuring that the children's individual needs are met.

Communication between staff is poor in the baby unit, satisfactory in the main unit and good in the pre-school unit. This enables staff in the pre-school unit to meet children's individual needs effectively. Ratios are reduced in the baby unit after lunch this means that the youngest children receive in-appropriate support and attention at this time. Most documentation is well organised and filed securely although the daily register shows that the nursery regularly exceed their registered numbers during the lunch time period and children's care could be compromised. There are many statements in place but few actual policies. The policies, procedures and statements that are in place are freely available to parents. Unfortunately they do not firmly underpin or support appropriate practice throughout the nursery.

There is a stable staff group but, if staff need to be recruited there are formal recruitment and vetting procedures in place to ensure those working with children would be suitable to do so. Training is given high priority and opportunities are discussed with staff on a regular basis to enhance the care given to the children. All staff are clear about their roles but less clear on

their responsibilities and how to implement nursery policies. Most staff work appropriately as a team.

The leadership and management of the nursery is satisfactory. The management team set high standards for the staff in the pre-school unit. They work with the staff and children and understand how things work on a day to day level. They have a clear vision for nursery education with a focus on children's personal development. Plans for the future are shared with the staff and they are involved in the observations and assessments of children's learning. The unit manager and owner regularly evaluate the nursery's activities and educational programme. Support for staff is in place and training needs are identified as appropriate. The management team are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the setting and monitoring is done through hands on practice with the team and children. Staff's input into the planning process is valued and all staff contribute regularly. Staff have a good understanding of individual learning needs and ensure the nursery is fully inclusive for all children. They recognise the need to adjust plans to meet individual children's needs and to revisit some areas of learning to reinforce children's understanding.

The provision does not meet the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the nursery was requested to; ensure that children in the pre-school unit had access to water at all times and that there was sufficient ventilation in the toddler and pre-school unit and an adequate temperature was maintained. Children in the pre-school unit have free access at all times to water and the windows have been altered to ensure good ventilation. The temperature throughout the nursery is now well maintained and thermometers in each room ensure the staff can check on the ambient temperature at all times. This ensures that children can remain hydrated, and play in a comfortable environment. Ventilation in the toddler unit is poor owing to the location of the nappy change area. The owner is to look at relocating the changing unit to improve the environment for children.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there has been one complaint, in September 2005, regarding general hygiene of the nursery. The provider's response was to initiate an Environmental Health check. All recommendations made were implemented and the provider detailed the action taken to prevent similar difficulties occurring in the future. The provider's response indicated that they have taken appropriate action and that they are meeting the requirements of the National Standards. The provider remains qualified for registration.

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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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, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- ensure conditions of registration are met
- plan and provide a suitable range of activities for children, which are appropriate for their stage of development and based on their individual needs, development and specific age group
- assess that hazards to children on the premises, both inside and outside, are minimised and staff are trained to have an understanding of health and safety requirements for the environment in which they work
- ensure staff are informed and aware of the importance of good hygiene practice in order to prevent the spread of infection and are kept up to date with hygiene procedures
- ensure food and drinks are properly prepared, in the baby unit, to comply with dietary requirements
- ensure staff actively promote equality of opportunity for all children
- develop staff's awareness and understanding of effective ways to manage children's behaviour, taking into account their age and stage of development
- make available to parents a written statement that provides details of the procedure to be followed if they have a complaint which includes the address and telephone number of the regulator
- ensure that the child protection procedure complies with those of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)
- plan and provide activities to help children's development in line with the aspects and approach described in the DfES publication 'Birth to three matters'
- provide some domestic style furniture to assist children in developing mobility and continue normal life experiences

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

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):

- ensure children are provided with more opportunities to write for a variety of purposes

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