



## Playbox Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117211
<b>Inspection date</b>	01 February 2007
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<b>Registered person</b>	Playbox Pre - School
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](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?

Playbox Pre-school opened in 1992 and moved to its current premises in 2000. It operates from a church hall in Beacon Park, a mainly residential area of Plymouth, and has access to a kitchen, toilets and outdoor play area. The pre-school serves the local area and is run by a committee.

There are currently 62 children on roll, including 39 funded three and four year olds attending. Children attend a variety of sessions. The setting supports children who speak English as an additional language and children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:00 to 11:30, Mondays to Fridays and 12:15 to 14:45 on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. A lunch club operates each day between 11:30 and 12:15 hours.

There are eight part-time staff and one full time staff member who work with the children. Over half of the staff have early years qualifications to level 2 or 3. Presently six staff are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification.

The group is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and is currently working towards its quality assurance scheme. It also receives support and advice from the local authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children's health and well-being is effectively supported by staff who have a good knowledge of children's individual needs. Children thoroughly enjoy snacks, which are nutritionally balanced and well presented. Snack time is organised to allow children to eat when they are hungry and they are developing good social skills. For example, children eat together at tables and are supported by staff who sit with them during these periods. In addition, children have free access to drinking water, milk and fresh fruit juice. Children have good opportunities to learn about healthy eating and although lunch boxes are reliant on parents, in most cases these include healthy lunches. This is because the setting regularly promotes healthy eating and all sweets and chocolate are banned.

Children benefit from having opportunities to play outside each day. There are several areas for children to play, including a tarmac area for large group games like 'The Farmer's in the Den', grassed areas for exploration of mini-beasts and a purpose built play area for climbing and balancing. As a result there are good opportunities to develop physical skills, like running and moving around large spaces safely. Children have use of a variety of tools, including paint brushes and glue sticks and they pour their own drinks. This means they are developing good control of their small muscles, whilst pouring and gluing.

Children are independent in self-care skills and hygiene practices are promoted very well by staff. For example, pictures are used to promote good hand washing routines. In addition staff always wear gloves and aprons when handling food. Furniture, equipment and resources are routinely cleaned and therefore children are protected from the spread of infection. Parents are immediately informed of any illness within the setting to ensure they are able to fully protect their children.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean, secure, well maintained environment within a local church hall. There are many colourful displays around the setting including parent's notice boards. Several of these are portable and put away at the end of each session. This helps to make the setting inviting within the limitations of a church hall, which is regularly used outside of the setting's hours.

Children develop a good sense of belonging, as they have a special place to store their belongings. For example, a place to put their outdoor coats. There is a wide range of resources, which include a resource bank for parents. The space is well organised to promote children's natural curiosity as learners as they access areas that are dedicated to certain aspects of learning, like, for instance writing and computer areas. This means planned activities facilitate children's independent learning well.

Children are safe because regular risk assessments are carried out and any actions are completed promptly. Children have access to a good selection of toys and resources that are in good condition and regularly cleaned. These are stored within easy reach of children. Children are learning about the importance of maintaining safety because they are frequently involved with tidying up. Staff are vigilant about the children's safety and there are good security systems, which ensure that all visitors sign in. Children develop a good awareness of safety issues as they practise fire evacuation. Fire safety equipment and electrical equipment are checked regularly.

Children's welfare is well promoted overall. The team of staff have a sound understanding of the issues surrounding child protection. There are procedures for reporting concerns and staff regularly update their knowledge and understanding. However some procedures are not fully understood by all staff members. Therefore some records do not clearly record existing injuries.

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

The provision is good.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time in the setting. They have a good attitude to learning and are happy, settled and engaged purposely throughout the sessions. Children are offered a good range of activities and experiences during their time at the setting. This includes a good balance of child led and adult directed play opportunities. For example focused sessions looking at positional language like up, over, under, through and pretend play like making dinner.

Staff have a good knowledge of the children's starting points, because they discuss them with parents before the child starts, and carry out assessments and observations to find the child's developmental range, likes and dislikes.

There is a good range of age appropriate resources, which children can easily access, including topic related activities. For example they independently play in the craft area thoroughly enjoying model making. Children's own curiosity as learners is developed because staff involved them in the planning process. Children help to tidy away and staff offer encouragement and praise at all times.

Children are very much valued and their work is displayed attractively, alongside adult led displays. For example, labelling includes different languages. This helps raise all children's self-esteem, sense of accomplishment and self-confidence. Overall experiences are fully extended to ensure that children benefit from their time in the setting.

Nursery education

Teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning. The staff team are passionate and committed to providing good education. They have a thorough understanding of the Foundation Stage and interact well with the children. This means children are keen to learn and eagerly explore the activities that are set out for them, including independently accessing the computer area. In addition they take care when making models in the craft area. During large group activities like 'Hamster Says', children confidently shout out loud colours like dark blue and inform others "no that's light blue". As a result children thoroughly enjoy themselves, which is evident on their elated faces.

Children are confident, independent and have good self esteem. This is because staff give children time to settle into the setting at their own pace. Children help to tidy away and staff offer encouragement and praise at all times. They concentrate well during a range of focused play opportunities, which includes large and small group activities and snack time. Children share home experiences, because small groups enable all children to contribute to discussions about pets. They consolidate and extend their learning as staff ask questions and use the opportunity to extend learning. As a result when children are lining up after washing hands, they 'chat' about new bathrooms. Staff ask about their bathroom colour. This immediately prompts a discussion about others' bathrooms, with children freely and confidently asking questions about everybody's bathroom colour. Staff ask good open questions, this means children develop an understanding of positional language, like up and over, through the bridge and enjoy learning in this way. In addition staff ensure that children have fun as they begin to understand numbers and simple sums, by asking for five children at snack time. They then encourage children to count how many children are present. Children move confidently with control and co-ordination in a variety of ways, including running and holding hands in a circle during a game of 'The Farmer's in the Den'. They move safely, with control and co-ordination under, over and through balancing and climbing equipment. The children show an awareness of space both for themselves and others, for example whilst walking in single file as they access the play area. Children have good personal independence skills, for instance personal care needs. They wash and dry hands correctly because there are appropriately displayed washing instructions. Children know about the use of everyday technology and use computers appropriately without adult help, for instance children use a mouse with good control and skill. Children begin to know about their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people. There are many examples of different languages displayed around the room. These include French, Italian, Spanish, and German.

There is a good range of age appropriate resources, which children can easily access including topic related activities. These are then made into packs for parents to use at home. Plans have been recently changed to include children's own interests and are yet to fully impact on children's learning. Nevertheless the staff team are fully aware of the need to further develop the planning system, to ensure a successful learning environment is maintained. Therefore overall experiences are extended to ensure that children benefit from their time in the setting. The assessment system is used to inform planning and set targets. Children's achievements and developments are monitored appropriately and transition records are used to inform parents and the next school of children's progress and targets. Furthermore there are systems in place to monitor teaching and learning, including peer observations.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children's individual needs are met by staff that know the children and their families very well, constantly exchanging information with parents. This includes, meeting with parents to regularly discuss children's progress and daily contact books to keep both parents and staff up to date with children's care and education.

Children are valued and respected as individuals. They benefit from the support of other professionals as the setting works closely with other specialists to meet the needs of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children's sense of belonging is encouraged to ensure they make their own decisions regarding activities and themes, this includes involving children in the planning process. In addition they access with ease an array of very good activities and learning opportunities. For example, children make decisions about the planning and therefore are directly involved in learning about living things like 'looking at mini-beasts'. These activities are generated from the children's own interests and as a consequence they thoroughly enjoy themselves. Children learn about their local community and the wider world through interesting projects, for example celebrating festivals. The staff team consistently update their knowledge and understanding of different festivals and traditions by their involvement with other agencies. This includes access to programmes that enable the setting to produce literature in different languages, therefore there are many examples of different languages around the setting. In addition children have access to a broad range of play resources, pictures and posters that show positive images of culture, ethnicity, gender and disability.

Children behave exceptionally well. Positive strategies are very effective and include a traffic light system to enable children to have a very good understanding of their own behaviour. Furthermore gentle reminders about appropriate behaviour like 'please' and 'thank you' are reinforced by the staff team. Circle time activities are also used very effectively. This ensures all children, even those children who may struggle to speak out loud have the opportunity to share experiences, as they chat excitedly about pets at home. Children learn to respect others and their property, for example tidying away toys and listening during story time. High value is given to the children's thoughts, opinions and decisions, therefore their self-esteem is enabled and they very confidently take part in all activities, taking pleasure in their achievements.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents complete a thorough initial profile about their child, which also looks at children's different learning styles. Regular high quality newsletter and informative notice boards ensure parents are extremely well informed. This includes the displaying of various information about illnesses and the theme of the week. In addition there is a very useful resource centre, where parents can continue to support learning at home. This is particularly useful to parents who work and ensures they have strong links with the setting. The quality prospectus ensures parents have clear and relevant information, which supports their child's care and wellbeing. There are many opportunities for parents to attend meetings with key workers to discuss children's development and how they are progressing and contact books are used daily.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in a large bright church hall. This is warm, well planned and made very welcoming, within the constraints of the premises. For example many resources are made easy to access. This is because there is some low-level storage of appropriate toys for children to make independent decisions on play. Each child has a key worker, who plans and assesses their overall development with links to support staff and parents. The environment is safe and enables children to move around freely and with confidence.

Consents regarding emergency medical treatment and outings are obtained from parents. All documentation is securely and confidentially stored. All records are regularly reviewed to make sure they are up-to-date and remain relevant to the care provided for each child. The staff maintain safety by ensuring supervision at all times and there are suitable systems in place to ensure all staff working with children have completed required vetting procedures. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management are good. The care and nursery education provided to the children and families within this setting is constantly monitored and as a result the setting is aware that it needs to further develop the new planning system, which has very recently been introduced. Overall policies and procedures work well in practice and are consistently applied throughout the setting. For example staff always wear aprons and gloves while giving out lunches. Children benefit from staff who are qualified and have a very good knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Staff have received appropriate training, which includes Birth to three matters framework and as a result they are developing a good knowledge and understanding of this framework and how to implement for all under threes. Planning is seen as important and both staff and children are given good opportunities to plan and discuss interests and activities they enjoy. This ensures children are fully involved and therefore fully engaged and interested in all activities and experiences.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

There are now suitable arrangements for managing access to the premises safely. There are now facilities to provide information for parents and carers in a format suitable for parents with English as an additional language. In addition the organisation of the home corner has increased opportunities for extended role play.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection 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 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):

- review the present system of recording existing injuries to ensure staff and parents fully understand the procedure

#### **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 the planning to sustain a successful learning environment.

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)