

Playsteps Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY321164
Inspection date	26 March 2007
Inspector	Charlotte Jenkin
Setting Address	The Hub, Church Place, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN1 5EH
Telephone number	01793 619 406
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Registered person	Playsteps Ltd
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 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?

Playsteps Nursery operates from six rooms in a converted former rectory in central Swindon. A maximum of 65 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 78 children on roll, and this included 32 funded three and four-year-olds. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 until 18:00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The group serves Swindon and the wider area. The setting employs 15 staff. Ten of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. Four staff are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play and rest in warm premises where suitable standards of hygiene are maintained. Children benefit from staff's up to date knowledge of first aid and the correct administrative procedures to follow if children have an accident or require medication whilst in their care. This

protects the children's health. Children are encouraged to develop their knowledge of good hygiene practises as part of the daily routine. For example, older children know to wash their hands prior to eating and after using the toilet. Staff maintain appropriate levels of hygiene across the nursery, for example, they regularly clean toys, eating surfaces and most rooms follow hygienic nappy changing procedures. However, procedures in the pre-school room are not as stringent as the rest of the nursery, and this has the potential to put children at risk from cross infection. The sickness policy is shared with parents and staff act appropriately when children become ill. Children are not, therefore, exposed to unnecessary illness.

Staff gain information from parents regarding children's dietary needs and preferences prior to a child commencing in the setting. All information is recorded and shared between staff to ensure children are not exposed to foods they are allergic to. Children develop an awareness of healthy eating through the varied and nutritious snacks and meals they enjoy whilst in the setting. They are regularly offered fruit and snacks throughout the day and have access to drinking water at all times. Children's dietary needs are successfully met.

Children are encouraged to develop a positive attitude towards exercise with frequent opportunities for fresh air and physical activity. They play in the nursery's large garden daily, where they show a good awareness of space, themselves and others. They move with control as they run around, change direction and stop. They develop their physical skills through the use of appropriate equipment, for example, throwing, kicking and catching balls, and climbing on various climbing frames with confidence. Children have opportunities to find out how their bodies can move, as they engage in music and dancing sessions.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play and rest in welcoming and child friendly premises which are well organised to meet the needs of the children attending. They have named pegs for their belongings and there are bright displays of the children's work around for all to view. This helps the children develop a sense of belonging in the nursery. Children have access to a wide range of toys and equipment that help support their development in all areas. These are stored at low level and children are able to make choices regarding the toys they wish to play with. These free choice opportunities encourage the children's confidence and independence. Children benefit from staff's awareness of the safety issues regarding the maintenance of the toys. Thus children play with toys that are safe, suitable and age appropriate.

Children play in safe premises, free from risks, as staff implement a range of safety measures daily to promote safety and prevent accidents within the setting. For example, safety gates prevent access to the stairs, sockets are covered and the floor is kept free of slip hazards. The premises are secure and entry is mainly monitored and parents have codes to enter the building. Accidents are regularly monitored to ensure repeated risks to the children are identified and minimised. All fire precautions are in place and the evacuation plan is practised to ensure it is effective in keeping children safe in the event of a fire. Children are encouraged to learn how to keep themselves safe in the setting, learning to tidy away toys to reduce trip hazards.

Children's welfare is protected by staff who have a sound knowledge of child protection issues and the procedures to follow in the event of concerns. The setting shares it's child protection duties formally with parents and this helps promote the children's well-being. However, staff do not routinely record children's existing injuries and this does not fully promote their welfare at all times.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enter the nursery confidently and willingly and settle quickly with staff, separating from their main carer with ease. Staff warmly greet them as they arrive, helping them feel welcome and secure in their care. They quickly explore the toys and equipment and make choices regarding the toys they wish to play with. Children appear at ease in the nursery and demonstrate a sense of belonging, knowing where to put their belongings and being familiar with the routines of the day, for example, getting an apron for water play. Children form positive relationships with peers, readily engaging in co-operative play together, for example, pretend play. They develop good levels of independence through self-help skills, including getting tissues to blow their noses and pouring water when thirsty. They become confident in expressing their needs, for example, requesting a cuddle from staff when upset. Most children sit quietly and concentrate during registration, being able to share their news. However, this is not well organised with younger children who have shorter concentration spans disrupting the older children during large group activities.

Babies and young children benefit from staff's in depth knowledge of the Birth to three matters framework. They are offered an interesting range of activities that help support their development in all aspects of this. Young children are happy, settled and well cared for in the nursery. They readily explore from a wide range of textures that stimulate their senses, for example, fruits, herbs, man made materials and natural materials. Their creativity is promoted through regular access to art and craft and sensory play, as well as music and singing activities. Babies confidently look at the low level pictures of the staff and then point to the picture and the staff member, developing a sense of belonging in the setting. Children confidently 'babble' and attempt to communicate and staff encourage their self-confidence by responding to this. Children demonstrate pride in their abilities and achievements, for example, when walking they stand and smile and staff respond to this, clapping to them and supporting their self-esteem. Staff frequently observe the children, keep developmental records and link new experiences to each child's individual stage of development. Babies do not, however, have frequent access to fresh air and walks in the local environment.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Three regular staff work with the funded children and they all hold appropriate qualifications. They have a suitable knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and generally interact with the children during activities. However, the learning environment does not routinely offer children free access to all curriculum areas. Staff do not utilise practical activities to support children's concept of counting, number and in solving simple problems and in writing for real purposes. Staff plan a varied range of activities for the children, although activity plans are not clearly linked to the stepping stones. This limits staff's confidence in knowing what children are expected to gain from these, or in providing challenges for more able children.

Children's achievements are currently highlighted in the progress review system. These are supported with some observations of children at play, which help build up a profile of what children know, understand and can do. However, although these are used loosely to inform future planning, focus activity plans do not detail the areas of development for the individual children's support.

Children talk with confidence and are able to express themselves clearly. They develop suitable listening skills, taking turns in conversation. Children are able to access a well resourced writing area, where they make marks and sometimes give meaning to these. However, they do not regularly make marks for real purposes, for example, in the role play area. Children enjoy listening to stories and independently select books to look at. More able children hear and say initial sounds in words and begin to recognise familiar words, for example, their names. Children are able to count objects reliably and recognise numbers out of sequence, during one to one activities. Staff do not utilise practical everyday routines to reinforce their concept of counting, numbers as labels or in solving simple problems. Children use language to describe shape, size and position.

Children show interest in how things work, for example, one child brought in a 'Tweenie' telephone and the children watched as he turned the wheel to make the pictures change. They operate simple equipment for example, tape recorders and older children become confident in completing simple programmes on the computer. Children remember and talk about past events and observe the natural environment. Children draw and use circles and lines to represent their ideas. More able children's drawings are developing well and have faces with features, arms and legs. They engage in role play based on first hand experiences, dressing up and making dinner for their friends and pretending to burn their hands on the cooker because it is hot. Children have planned opportunities to explore textures and make collages. They do not have free access to a fully resourced art and craft area to develop their creativity in using materials of their choice to represent their own ideas.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by staff who value them, respect them and know their individual needs well. This helps promote the children's self-esteem as staff gain detailed information regarding their backgrounds. Children for whom English is an additional language are well supported in the nursery and have their language development promoted well. The Toddler room has a display of the daily routine which is labelled in the languages of the children attending. However, the pre-school room has not reflected the diversity of the children attending, by promoting print in the environment by using labelling in additional languages. Children with special educational needs have their development supported appropriately in the setting, through encouraging other professionals to work in the nursery and taking heed of advice offered to them. However, written individual plans are not put in place to ensure all staff are consistently supporting children's individual areas for learning.

Children's behaviour in the nursery is good. Staff are good role models to the children and are respectful to them and calm in their manner. They use sensitive and age appropriate methods for managing unwanted behaviour and frequently praise the children for their acts of kindness. This encourages the children to learn right from wrong and to develop respect for peers.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children have opportunities to find out about the lives of others, as they learn about festivals celebrated by differing cultures. They engage in activities, including food tasting and art and craft activities that help them to develop respect for the lives of others. Children show concern for their peers, offering them help and through sharing of the toys and equipment.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Children benefit from the solid partnership with parents regarding their care needs as they have their routines respected and they are cared for in line

with parents' wishes. Parents have daily opportunities to discuss childcare issues with staff and exchange information. Written information is also exchanged with the parents of younger children in the setting. This enables staff to offer the children continuity of care. Parents receive comprehensive information regarding the curriculum and six areas of learning, as well as the activities available to their child. They are kept up to date with the current theme for learning and are invited to attend information evenings regarding the curriculum. Parents have formal opportunities to discuss their child's progress and view assessment records. However they are not currently encouraged to contribute to these detailing their child's achievements outside of the group.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by suitable and appropriately qualified staff. Recruitment procedures ensure all adults working with children are suitable to do so. Good levels of staff retention mean children are offered consistency and continuity of care, helping them feel settled in the nursery. The registers are accurate and show the exact times the children are in the care of the staff. The required adult to child ratios are maintained and this means children receive suitable adult support and have their needs well met.

Most policies are implemented in a way that promotes the children's welfare, care and learning. All necessary consents have been gained from parents regarding children participating in routines and activities and this protects their welfare and ensures they are cared for in line with parents' wishes. All required paperwork is stored securely, well organised and readily available for inspection.

Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management is satisfactory.

Staff generally work well together as a team and share most responsibilities of the group, although the pre-school room staff do not consistently have a positive role model to motivate them in their daily practice. They have regular opportunities to meet as a team to discuss the children's progress and plan future sessions. Staff attend regular training in the Foundation Stage curriculum and are often keen to implement new ideas into the setting. The Manager of the nursery is supportive and regularly monitors staff practice through formal meetings, identifying areas for future training and development. However, she has not yet developed a system to ensure plans for improving the delivery of the curriculum and staff practice issues are being implemented as agreed.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration no complaints have been made to Ofsted that has 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 children's existing injuries are recorded and shared with parents
- make sure that babies have regular opportunities for fresh air and trips out in the locality
- develop the support offered to children with special educational needs by implementing play plans to ensure children's development is consistently supported by all staff. Develop the labelling of displays around the nursery to reflect the diversity of the children attending

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):

- develop staff's knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum to ensure children have free access to all curriculum areas and that challenges are appropriate to their stage of development.
- ensure planning has clear links to the stepping stones and that this details extension ideas for more able children
- develop the learning environment to support children's free creativity and mark making for real purposes. Utilise routines to encourage children's concept of counting, using numbers as labels and solving simple problems
- develop the system for ongoing monitoring of the delivery of the whole curriculum and staff practice

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