

Playdays

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY339804
Inspection date	20 March 2007
Inspector	Julie Denise Edmonds
Setting Address	Caister Community Centre, Beach Road, Caister-on-Sea, Norfolk, NR30 5ER
Telephone number	07914 716765
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Registered person	Angela Mary Ward
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	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.

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?

Playdays Nursery opened in 1993, with the current private owner running the group since September 2006. It operates from a room in the community centre in Caister-on-Sea and there is access to a fully enclosed garden for outdoor play. A maximum of 17 children aged from two to five years may attend at any one time. It is open Monday to Friday from 09:00 to 11:30 during term time only.

There are currently 25 children from two to three years on roll. This includes five children who receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery serves the families of the village and local area. It supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The owner and two members of staff work with the children each day, with two back-up staff members providing cover as needed. All staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The group follow appropriate routines to help prevent the spread of infection, promoting children's good health. This includes keeping areas where food is prepared and served clean, wiping table tops where children have their snack. Children are learning to follow simple good health and hygiene practices, such as hand washing before snack time and after using the toilet. They complete personal hygiene tasks with increasing independence as they use the toilet and hand washing facility adjacent to the play room. Effective information is in place and shared with parents to protect children from communicable diseases. Children are safeguarded in the event of an accident with a staff member holding a current first aid training certificate to be able to assist them as needed.

Snacks provided by the group include fresh and dried fruit and plain biscuits. The children choose from water, juice or milk at snack time, with some enjoying alternative drinks provided by their parents. Some activities allow children to take part in food preparation, such as preparing sandwiches or making peppermint creams for a Mother's Day gift. These opportunities are limited as the group do not have use of a separate kitchen with cooking facilities. Children sit together at tables in groups at snack time. Organisation does not allow for staff to sit with the children to fully support conversation and create a relaxed atmosphere. The children have regular drinks to provide them with sufficient fluid intake. However, fresh drinking water is not easily accessible to children at all times to allow them to respond to their own needs independently when they recognise that they are thirsty.

The children take part in regular and varied physical activity, with time allocated towards the end of sessions for active play. This supports them to develop a positive attitude. The children benefit from use of a nursery trampoline, small see-saws and a slide. Opportunities to develop physical skills such as climbing on more challenging apparatus are limited. The children enjoy using their energy to run on the grassed area outdoors together, they kick balls and use streamers to see the direction of the wind. Whole group physical activities include reaching and stretching as they use a parachute. They try to keep a ball on the parachute fabric and are excited as staff then let the parachute drift onto them and lift it off them again. They learn to balance on stamping cup stilts with handles and play skittles. Opportunities to gain fresh air are more frequent in the summer months and when the weather is fine. Increased use of outdoors is an area the group have identified as part of their action plan. Children are able to rest according to their individual needs.

Individual health and dietary needs are met because the provision gains relevant information prior to children attending and takes heed of this.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in welcoming and sufficiently warm premises, maintained to a satisfactory standard. The child-centred environment created is enhanced with attractive displays of children's craft work and colourful posters. Children's development and comfort is promoted through appropriately organised use of the available space. Tables and chairs are well placed to allow free movement between activities. The inviting layout of toys and activities supports the children's play, with accessible suitable resources presented on the floor and on table tops.

Children access well presented dressing up clothes from hanging storage in the play room and share books in the cosy book corner with a soft quilt and cushions to sit on. They use a satisfactory range of age and stage appropriate furniture and equipment, indoors and out.

Care is provided in an environment where risks are assessed to promote children's safety. However, on occasions their safety is compromised as staff are not always consistent in ensuring that measures are in place. For example, the door to the play room and gate in the outdoor play area are occasionally not secured. Children are well supervised, with staff able to monitor children using the toilet facilities while allowing them sufficient privacy. Emergency escape plan practice raises children's awareness and supports safe evacuation. Children learn about keeping themselves safe, with reminders given by staff to 'remember to walk, so you don't hurt yourselves'.

Children are well protected because the staff understand their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding children and are able to put them into practice. They are supervised by vigilant adults who have access to safeguarding children guidance. The group has systems in place to only release children into the care of other adults with parents' permission.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children who have been attending the group for some time are comfortable, relaxed and very well settled in the company of the staff. They are forming good relationships with both adults and other children at the group. Staff use the children's names when they talk to them, providing a warm welcome. They work at the children's level, listening to what they say and responding appropriately. The children are becoming confident and developing good self-esteem. For example, they ask staff for help with activities. Children develop social skills as they play alongside each other, progressing to play together. They develop independence as they carry out individual tasks.

The suitable variety of activities and play experiences allow children to make choices and decisions. Activities include building with large construction toys, threading with laces, garage workshop pretend play, small world pretend play with Noah's ark and enjoying a range of books. Children take part in some creative free play opportunities each session. They explore paints at an easel, applying the paint in different ways, such as with a toothbrush. They enjoy playing with play dough. They also take part in structured focused activities as part of the current theme, such as making an Easter card. They sustain interest at activities and are given time to develop their play. For example, when they go for a 'drive' in the 'car' made from large waffle construction. Children enjoy imaginative play using cameras and dressing up. They pretend to be fireman. They are fully occupied and move freely between the attractive range offered. Activities meet the needs of the younger children attending with observations made and planning linked to the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

Nursery Education

Children show a sense of belonging to the nursery. They adapt their behaviour well in response to the routine, sitting together at circle time. The children enjoy listening to stories read by staff at planned whole group times and spontaneously during the session in small groups or individually. Children are encouraged to pretend to write for a purpose at the travel agents. They are using drawing and writing materials with increasing control, beginning to form the first letter of their name. They have opportunities to develop their counting skills. For example,

they enjoy number rhymes together, such as 'Five Little Men in a Flying Saucer', joining in excitedly as each 'little man' used to demonstrate 'flies away'. They take pleasure when they are praised for correctly recognising numbers. They are supported to identify 'bigger' and 'smaller' as they play with Russian dolls. Children operate some simple equipment, such as calculators, making things work. They are learning about living things. For example, about wild birds and feeding them in winter. The children explore some different materials and natural items such as pine cones. They manoeuvre buggies as they negotiate pathways. They use paint brushes, glue sticks and press and roll out play dough. Children enjoy using musical instruments. They enthusiastically shake and bang instruments as they sing at circle time. They use their imagination in role play. They construct and mend the 'car' at the garage workshop. They benefit from a range of opportunities to develop their imagination in role play, including at the baby clinic, café, kitchen, Chinese take away and beauty salon.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children's interest and play is appropriately supported. The staff are consistently interested in what they say and do, working physically at the children's level and talking with them about what they are doing. Children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. Observation, planning and assessment systems are in use and being developed. Entries in children's individual developmental records include observations describing what children are able to do in some areas of learning and guide next steps to help the children to progress. These 'learning stories' are updated by staff. Future planning is generally linked to observations. Staff discuss progression of individuals together and provide an additional activity each Friday to promote their development. However, the focused activity for the week gives more able children insufficient challenge to promote good progress. There is limited free access to materials and simple tools, such as scissors to support their learning. Individual achievements are recognised and praised, with photographs taken. For example, when a child constructs a tower and counts the bricks used to build it.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are learning to manage their own behaviour with reminders and explanations given by staff. Staff use positive language to promote expected behaviour. Additional toys are introduced to resolve squabbles between younger children and sharing is encouraged. They learn to be sensitive to the feelings of others as they are encouraged to apologise when appropriate. The suitable behaviour management policy gives examples of unacceptable behaviour. They learn from the positive example given by the staff. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are encouraged to think about their emotions and talk about feelings, such as during a Valentine's Day activity. They learn to be helpful as they tidy away the toys and activities with staff. Children become aware of expected codes of behaviour, such as sitting down in the book corner.

Children's likes, dislikes and preferences are respected with sensitivity by staff. For example, a child upset by usual hand washing routines is offered the alternative of wiping his hands or washing them at a different sink. This ensures that he takes part in appropriate routines while giving the reassurance he needs. Modern resources, such as dolls, play figures, books and attractive posters on display help children to become aware of diversity and develop positive attitudes to others. Children learn about their own culture and benefit from some opportunities to learn about the culture of others. For example, learning about celebrations and festivals, such as Chinese New Year, Harvest Festival and Easter. The group is proactive to ensure they are well prepared for children with additional needs to attend. This includes developing their understanding by attending available training. Children are developing some links with their

own community. For example, through visits to the local school and occasional visitors, such as the librarian.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. A prospectus states the group's aims and gives basic information, including about the curriculum. Useful information about the areas of learning is included in the prospectus and is provided in more detail on a wall display. Helpful newsletters for parents include the current theme. However, there are few opportunities for parental involvement in their child's learning. Generally parents are not contributing to learning stories to inform future planning and aid individual children's progress. They are enthusiastic about the opportunities provided for their children and have access to their child's learning story folder on request. Basic information is gained about what children can do when they begin attending the setting.

Children benefit from a gradual and individual settling in process and the trusting relationships built between staff and parents. Two-way communication is encouraged verbally with a friendly welcome from staff. This exchange enables the staff to provide care that is well matched to children's individual needs. Parents are invited to discuss any concerns or complaints they may have, promoting early resolution. Contact details of Ofsted are available, supporting exchange of information with the regulator. Notice boards keep parents up-to-date, with comprehensive information accessible in the group's operational plan.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are not left alone with adults who have not completed appropriate checks. Procedures followed to ensure the continued suitability of staff are being developed. All the required documentation is in place and suitably maintained for the efficient and safe management of the provision.

Children and adults are welcomed into the setting by experienced and qualified staff. A range of information gives parents an overall picture of how the setting operates on a daily basis, with policies and procedures personal to the group. Children benefit from a friendly staff team who work together well. The staff work efficiently and swiftly to set out the appealing play room ready for each session. The children receive appropriate adult time and attention.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The appropriate staff induction process includes safeguarding children and caring for children with additional needs. Job descriptions and staff deployment information ensures the staff are aware of their individual responsibilities. Team building is supported, with staff meetings and daily informal communication. Acceptable systems monitor the success of the provision, with the group having their own action plan for improvements. This includes purchasing a digital camera and a laptop to offer children further opportunities to develop skills with modern technology. A delegated staff member ensures that the curriculum covers all aspects of the areas of learning. Staff are motivated and encouraged to attend training workshops to keep up-to-date with current practice. Planned training includes food hygiene, risk assessment and first aid. Staff performance and development is monitored informally to promote children's welfare, care and learning, with appraisals procedures being developed.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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.

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 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):

- organise snack and meal times to fully support conversation and create a relaxed atmosphere and ensure fresh drinking water is easily accessible to children at all times
- ensure measures to promote children's safety are in place at all times

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 activities to give more able children sufficient challenge to support good progress and allow them free access to craft materials and simple tools to support their learning
- extend opportunities for parental involvement in their child's learning.

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