

Playmates Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	303450
Inspection date	24 April 2007
Inspector	Judith Anne Kerr
Setting Address	64 Wilmere Lane, Widnes, Cheshire, WA8 5UR
Telephone number	0151 495 2939
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Registered person	Gillian Dillon
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 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?

Playmates Day Nursery is one of two nurseries run by Playmates Nurseries Limited. It opened in 1996 and operates from five rooms in a converted house and a further two rooms in an annexe in the grounds. It is situated on the outskirts of Widnes. A maximum of 50 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 all year round except for public holidays. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently a total of 73 children on roll. Of these 27 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from St. Helens, Warrington and Halton. The nursery supports children with disabilities.

The nursery employs 17 staff who work with the children, of these, 13 are qualified. Three members of staff are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about the importance of good personal hygiene through well organised routines. They always wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet. Staff maintain good standards of hygiene throughout the premises as they continually implement the effective health and safety procedures which are in place. Children are well protected from infection because there are good written policies shared with parents, which are well implemented by staff. They are treated appropriately for minor accidents because staff are first aid trained. Records are kept of all accidents and medication. These are for the most part maintained as required.

Children benefit from a healthy diet. Healthy eating is well promoted as children are offered a varied, balanced diet. Meals provided are freshly prepared each day on the premises. Children are encouraged to develop an understanding of their needs as they confidently help themselves to water throughout the day. Staff talk to children about healthy choices so that they understand the impact food has on their bodies. Individual dietary requirements are complied with and this ensures children remain healthy.

Children have regular opportunities to engage in variety of physical play experiences. Outdoor activities in the garden encourage children to engage in energetic play, such as running, climbing, peddling and balancing. Children show good control and co-ordination whilst they play cricket and walk along the different sized logs in the outdoor play area. Children enjoy taking part in music and movement sessions, which are well organised by enthusiastic staff who interact well with the children and encourage them all to participate. Children are able to rest according to their needs. For example, children sit in the quiet areas of their rooms and rest their bodies when they are tired. They recognise that following exercise they may be 'hot, thirsty or puffed'.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean, bright and comfortable environment. The good organisation of toys and equipment means that children move around safely and independently to access available resources, which are positioned appropriately at children's height. Children enjoy playing with a wide range of good quality activities which help them to progress in all areas of their development.

Children are cared for in an environment which is for the most part safe. There is a good security system in place for the safe arrival and departure of children and to protect children from intruders. Children are kept safe whilst moving around the nursery because staff are well deployed and provide children with good supervision. Effective procedures for carrying out risk assessments help to protect children from potential hazards. Children are developing a good understanding of fire safety because they have regular opportunities to practise fire evacuation procedures. However, the area behind the annexe is used to store ladders and debris, this compromises children's safety.

Children are well protected by staff who have a good knowledge and understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse and know what action to take if they have concerns about a child in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are relaxed, happy and secure in their surroundings. Good settling-in procedures ensure a smooth transition between home and the nursery. A well-established key worker system and consistent staff members helps children develop positive relationships with key people. This enables them to become absorbed in the range of activities provided. They are confident, interested and enjoy their time at nursery. The children make good progress in all areas of development. Staff have a good understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and plan activities accordingly. They record their observations and assessment of children under three years and plan for the 'next steps' of their learning. As a result, planning is based on what children already know and can do, which helps their progress.

The organisation of the day provides for children's individual needs, ensuring that all children are interested and motivated. Children make choices about their play, selecting activities and resources from the range available. This helps develop their independence and self-esteem. Young children and babies respond well to activities which appeal to their senses. For example, they particularly enjoy the treasure baskets, soap flakes and water play. Staff support the children well at their level and enable them to explore at their own pace. The toddlers enthusiastically act out roles using small world play and role play activities, such as a garden centre, with plants, a wheelbarrow, spades, forks and flowers. They are supported to extend and try out new skills, such as rolling the balls down the pipe, helping to lay the tables and then sweep up after lunch. Babies and toddlers are finding their voice, learning about early speech patterns and developing a vocabulary because staff talk to them. Staff model conversation by responding to baby babble and children babble to each other when playing. Staff listen to children and respond appropriately. Language is very well supported.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff's knowledge of the Foundation Stage provides opportunities to enable children to progress in all areas of development. Overall, this ensures children receive a full programme of good quality education. Staff plan purposeful activities which provide opportunities for teaching both indoors and outdoors. Opportunities for children to engage in activities that they can initiate themselves with appropriate intervention by staff are good. Consequently, children are consistently engaged in the learning process, helping them to make progress along the stepping stones. Opportunities to arouse children's thinking are well promoted as staff use excellent questioning techniques that stimulate the children's interests and enables them to build on what they already know. Curriculum planning and assessment systems are used well to ensure children's next steps are identified. Procedures to involve parents in their children's assessments are well implemented and consequently, parents are fully involved in their children's learning.

Children use their imagination during role play activities, making up simple stories. They are developing good concentration skills and have access to tools and materials to make models, such as rockets. Children are beginning to understand the meaning of print and enjoy looking at books, listening to stories and reading to each other. They link sounds to letters during circle time as they help to take the register and recognise their name on the table at lunch time. Writing materials are accessible throughout the day. However, children have limited opportunities to attempt writing for their own purposes as writing materials are not consistently available in all areas of the provision.

Children are confident and engage well with each other and visitors, sharing their achievements. The children speak openly and confidently and receive regular opportunities to share their news with their friends in show and tell time. Their behaviour is good and reflects the staff's high expectations. Children take turns, share and negotiate roles in games. They are successfully supported to learn how to manage their own behaviour and respect others. They enjoy learning about the lives of others. For example, they talk about their siblings and when they went to the farm. Opportunities for children to develop their skills in designing and making are actively promoted as the nursery encourages them to construct and build designs using different media. Little use is made of technology resources to support and extend children's learning. Children are introduced to number and problem solving through daily activities, counting and sorting as part of daily routines. For example, they sing songs and action rhymes, such as 'three green speckled frogs' and 'five little men in a flying saucer'. A variety of activities enable children to explore textures, colours, shapes and sounds; they print, paint, roll dough, write in the coloured sand and mould the flubber.

Staff use information from parents to help them establish what children know and can do on entry and their own observations to monitor children's progress. Children are challenged well as staff consistently use open-ended questions to extend their language and develop their thinking. They value what the children say using positive responses, displaying their work attractively and promoting their self-esteem.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children show a sense of belonging when they share their experiences with each other. Children participate in a variety of cultural traditions which helps them to develop a positive attitude and respect for others. For example, they try eating with chop sticks, make masks and a lion for Chinese New Year and make flags for Saint George's day. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered well by staff who give them individual attention and encourage them to be independent.

Children with disabilities receive excellent support as staff work effectively with parents. Children are developing a good understanding of what is right and behave well. They are polite and cooperative. For example, they take turns in being the table monitor for the day.

The partnerships with parents and carers is good. This ensures that children settle well. Children experience consistent care due to good communication systems between parents and staff. At the beginning of children's placements, parents and staff meet to share information about children's starting point. Staff use this information to plan how to help children progress. Policies and procedures are shared with parents, including information on how to make a complaint. Parents positively endorse the care and education their children receive at the setting and describe it as having 'friendly and helpful staff'.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

There are effective recruitment procedures in place which ensure that staff are appropriately vetted and qualified. Staff work well together as a team and are deployed well to ensure that children are not placed at risk. A commitment to ongoing training throughout the nursery helps to ensure that care provided is of a good quality. For example, staff have recently attended training relating to early literacy, first aid and multicultural story sacks. All policies and

procedures are in place and are implemented well by staff. However, some accident records are not countersigned by parents to acknowledge the entry. Confidentiality of information is respected as records on children and staff are securely locked away.

Leadership and management of the nursery is good. There is a commitment to develop the provision through ongoing staff training. Staff have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and use this knowledge to effectively plan activities. Staff are supported in their work through regular staff meetings. The manager demonstrated that suggestions from staff and parents are valued. For example, all suggestions are explored and acted upon.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to provide resources that positively reflect gender and share the child protection procedures with parents before children are admitted to day care.

A range of resources which positively reflect gender are provided. These include dolls, books and jigsaws, which help children to see both men and women in leading roles. The child protection policy is shared with parents during the admission procedure. This helps them understand the nurseries' responsibility for helping to keep children safe from harm and abuse.

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 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):

- minimise risks to children from hazards in the storage area outside
- ensure parents consistently sign the accident record to acknowledge the entry.

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):

- consistently provide mark making materials throughout the provision to encourage children to write for a purpose and further develop their writing skills
- further develop resources to encourage children to show an interest in technology.

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