

Pitter Patter Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	503198
Inspection date	12 May 2007
Inspector	Jean Evelyn Thomas
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Registered person	Pitter Patter 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 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?

Pitter Patter Nursery opened in 2001. It operates from five rooms in a large converted house in Wallasey. A maximum of 50 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. There are currently 81 children aged from birth to under five years on roll. Of these, 28 children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery currently supports children with disabilities.

The nursery employs 17 members of staff. Of these, 15 hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are learning about good hygiene through well implemented routines, for example, hand washing before eating, after toileting and outside play. Children understand that they need to wash their hands to remove the germs. Good hygiene procedures throughout the setting ensure that children are cared for in a clean environment. For example, staff wipe the tables before children use them for eating and wear aprons for specific tasks, such as nappy changing and food preparation. Children are developing good levels of independence in attending to their own personal care, as they practise using the potty, learn to manage the toilet independently and brush their teeth after meals. From an early age children know that they have to protect themselves when playing outside in the sunshine. They successfully find their own hat without prompt from the staff before leaving the care room. Sun protection cream is applied to the children. Effective procedures are in place for sick and infectious children which help prevent the spread of infection and help to keep children healthy. Procedures are in place if children contract a communicable illness. The majority of staff hold current first aid certificates to ensure correct procedures are followed in the event of an accident.

Children are well nourished and enjoy a very varied menu of freshly cooked, healthy food. Children are encouraged to try a wide variety of different foods, including lots of fruit and vegetables. Children learn about healthy eating through activities, child friendly posters and discussion. They are involved in some food preparation, for example, they help to cut up different fruits to blend for a healthy drink and make sandwiches for snacks. Information is obtained from parents to ensure the appropriate diet is provided. Mealtimes are relaxed and sociable as staff and children sit together, sharing conversation. Children become independent in feeding themselves. Staff encourage these skills with the babies as they plan activities with this purpose, such as playing feeding the dolls. Water is situated in each care room. Older children freely access the water responding to their bodily need to drink when they are thirsty.

Children enjoy various opportunities to experience physical exercise through well planned activities and daily routines. They access a range of activities, such as pedalling bikes, pushing pushchairs and throwing and catching. Large apparatus offers children greater challenge in their physical development. Children benefit from the weekly session with a trained fitness instructor who organises physical activities which promote outcomes for children using the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum. Children eagerly participate in action songs and use their imagination well in music and movement sessions. Babies sit and rock their bodies to the rhythm of the music. There are large floor cushions or settees in each of the care rooms to allow children to rest and relax as they wish. Staff accommodate children's individual sleep patterns and make children comfortable to sleep whilst the other children pursue play.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a secure and welcoming setting. The environment is bright and attractively decorated with the children's art work, photographs and child friendly posters. There is ample space for children to play both indoors and outside. The outdoor play area is used throughout the year as an integral part of the children's play and learning experiences. Children benefit from a good range of suitable, age appropriate toys, equipment and furniture.

A wide range of resources is presented at child height, so that children can select them freely. Babies benefit from this organisation and confidently make choices in play taking equipment from the open shelves. Regular maintenance and cleaning rotas ensure that the toys and equipment are maintained in a clean and safe condition.

Children are cared for in a safe setting. Children's risk of accidental injury is minimised as staff conduct appropriate risk assessments and practice is consistently evaluated. Accidents are routinely monitored. The nursery has a very clearly defined security policy. Staff use the security camera to control who they admit to the nursery and use of the visitors' register increases children's safety. There is clear planning for safe evacuation in an emergency. A fire drill is organised on a monthly basis to ensure its effectiveness and for children to become familiar with the procedure. Children's understanding of safety is promoted well, as staff discuss limits and boundaries with them within everyday activities. They encourage children to develop very good levels of independence within a safe environment. Well planned activities promote children's awareness of wider safety issues, like road safety.

Children are protected by the staff attending child protection training and having a good understanding of safeguarding issues.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enter the nursery confidently and separate happily from their parents and carers as they are warmly greeted by staff. This sense of security is achieved through the key worker system and the settling in procedures for new children, which are planned to meet the individual children's needs. The transition to new care rooms is managed sensitively. Visits are made to the new room to help children become familiar with the different environment. Children develop a strong relationship with staff. They approach staff in a relaxed manner and express their ideas with confidence. Staff know their children well and are attentive to their needs. Staff respond to the non verbal communication of the younger children, such as knowing when they are tired or hungry. Children receive cuddles from staff which contributes to their sense of security and helps them feel safe. Children enjoy their time in the nursery. Staff and children laugh together and there is a sense of enjoyment in being together. This atmosphere is apparent in all areas of the nursery.

On arrival children immediately pursue play selecting activities of their choice. Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan varied daily play experiences for the younger children. Using the framework staff observe children's play to plan purposefully for individual children's needs to help them make progress. The varied and stimulating programme of activities challenges children, as a result they show interest in the activities and develop high levels of concentration from an early age. For example, a small group of toddlers play a game of finding every day objects which staff lay out on the floor, these include clothes and household utensils. The children have fun finding the item named by the staff. This promotes confidence, language development and shows their understanding of vocabulary. Babies have good opportunities to learn through using their senses as they explore and investigate different textures, sounds and smells. They make patterns in garlic spread with their fingers. Babies handle pretend play resources, such as the telephone which staff use to encourage them to vocalise. Children develop confidence and self-esteem because they have an understanding of the routines of the day. However, at times the structure of the day does not meet the needs of all the children, for example, the older children lying down for a rest at midday.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and planning helps children to make good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff complete observations and assessments on the individual children. Tracking systems are in place to ensure activities cover all aspects of the Foundation Stage and the children's involvement in these. Staff use these records and their own knowledge of the children to adapt activities to match children's individual needs to help them make progress in their learning. However, there is no formal differentiation in the written plans to make sure this information is consistently used. Children pursue activities with great enthusiasm and their interest is sustained, as they enjoy a range of planned activities and experiences in all areas of their learning each day. Children learn to listen well, concentrate and persevere with activities they enjoy. They learn to use initiative as they have opportunity to make their own choices and develop their own ideas. For example, playing in the sand children realise they need a flag for the castle they have built and decide to make their own.

Children have good opportunities to practise their writing skills indoors and outside. Staff provide a variety of writing materials outside, such as chalks and crayons. Many children write their own name and link sounds to letters as staff encourage them to sound out the first letter of the days of the week and the month of the year. Two children talking to each other after the group session discuss the letter 'm' for 'Monday' stating it is also for 'mummy'. Self initiated they pursue this further and go to the name board and find names beginning with 'm'. Children understand writing carries a meaning as they use writing materials in the role play area. They write lists and phone messages. They take additional resources from the writing table to use in their imaginative play. Children are confident communicators and use language well to share their own ideas and experiences. Staff introduce new language into activities. Children enjoy books either independently or listening with pleasure to stories. Staff's questioning prompts children to recall what happened in the story and to predict what will happen next. Children have a good sense of time. They differentiate between past and present and talk about past events in their own lives and what happened yesterday.

Children understand and use numbers well. Children count and become familiar with number concepts within their everyday routines, such as counting numbers in the date and children in the line. They use mathematical language with comprehension, as they sort and order different shapes, make patterns and compare sizes. They count the cars they have lined up in small world play and then count backwards. They investigate mathematical ideas as they fill and empty containers in the water and when they bake. Many children recognise basic shapes and staff introduce them to 3D shapes. Using junk resources children make a large tree as a group activity. Children develop good exploration and investigation skills as they go on a flower hunt in the garden. The children eagerly look for flowers. Children compare differences, such as size and number of petals. Children are learning about the world around them through planned topics and visitors including police officers and the dentist. They have many opportunities to explore their local community. Resources in role play and the maths area draws children's attention to the use and importance of technology in our everyday lives, for example, calculators, telephones and the toy vacuum cleaner. There is good access to the computer and children are clearly familiar with the programs and what to do. They demonstrate excellent skills when using the mouse to click and drag items around the screen.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's behaviour is good. They learn to be kind and polite. Children are courteous to each other and continue to use manners such as, please, thank you and excuse me when absorbed in play. Staff remind children why certain rules are in place, such as not pushing past each other on the stairs, so that they begin to take responsibility for and manage their own behaviour. They learn to listen carefully to instructions and to be respectful of others when they are speaking at group time. They are learning about helping others through activities, such as a sponsored charity toddle. Children enjoy positive relationships with the staff and with each other. Children are obviously delighted when their friends arrive as they greet each other warmly and invite them to join in the activities. Children are equally welcoming to visitors. Staff present themselves as good role models, showing interest in what children are doing and saying. Children's confidence and self-esteem is developed well by staff with very good use of praise and encouragement.

Children learn about the diversity of society through well planned activities, play materials, posters and books reflecting positive images of race, culture, disability and gender. All children have equal access to all play materials and staff have a good understanding of the nursery's equal opportunity policy to ensure it is implemented. Systems have been established to include and support children with disabilities. Staff are aware of the importance of working closely with parents and outside agencies to meet children's needs. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are provided with information about the Foundation Stage curriculum and the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Photographs are displayed showing how activities link into the different aspects of learning and development. Parents have access to their children's assessment profiles. Staff routinely share information about children's progress and formal parents evenings are regularly planned. Staff provide the parents of older children with activities linking into the current theme and books to continue learning at home. Parents feel comfortable to remain in the care room as their child settles into play. The installation of the close circuit television in the care rooms gives parents additional opportunity to observe their child involved in activities. Information is set out in the foyer to keep parents informed about the organisation of the nursery and events. Policies and procedures are available to parents at all times. Parents views are sought through questionnaires, where possible suggestions are implemented. For example, increasing the variety of fruit and vegetables in the children's diet.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management is good. The owner, who is also the manager, is committed to self evaluation and improving the quality of care and the provision of nursery education. Systems are in place for ongoing formal self evaluation this includes seeking the children's opinions. The manager regularly works directly with staff and the children, consequently has a realistic over view of the provision. Staff meetings and appraisals take place regularly to identify strengths and weaknesses and any staff development needs. Staff attend regular training to update their knowledge and skills.

Comprehensive policies and procedures are effectively implemented, so that children's welfare is safeguarded. Recruitment and vetting procedures are thorough, ensuring that staff are

suitably skilled and experienced to work with children. However, only a verbal declaration about the applicant's state of health is sought. Clear procedures are in place to ensure that no person who is not vetted is left unsupervised with children. All required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place. The code of confidentiality is strictly adhered to protect children's privacy.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last nursery education inspection the recommendations raised have been met. An art and craft area is permanently available to the children which is frequently used, this gives children ongoing opportunities to express their thoughts and feelings as recommended. It was recommended to involve children fully at story time by extending their understanding of rhyme and print. Staff understand the need to use story time and other activities to help children understand rhyme and to talk about letters, linking sounds to letters. It was also recommended to improve the use of technology and multicultural resources. Children's technology skills are well promoted through the availability of the computer and resources in the maths area and in role play. The multi cultural resources, such as the small world play people and dressing up clothes are an integral part of the play equipment children choose from.

At the last care inspection it was recommended that the operational plan was updated, this is regularly reviewed to ensure it reflects current nursery practice. For example, policies and procedures are up to date and staff photographs displayed on the care rooms doors correctly identify staff deployed in these rooms. It was recommended that information pertaining to the effectiveness of the fire drill was recorded. A detailed log is now maintained to identify any problems occurred and action needed to improve children's safety. The child protection statement has been amended as recommended to include the procedure to follow if an allegation is made against a member of staff to safeguard children from harm.

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 complaint record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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 some of the organisational aspects of the day to make sure children's individual needs are met and they fully benefit from the facilities available
- formalise systems in place to establish applicants medical suitability to work with children.

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 differentiation in the written planning to make sure children's individual learning and developmental outcomes are met.

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