

The Park Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY336939
Inspection date	28 March 2007
Inspector	Sarah Elizabeth Howell
Setting Address	86 Moughland Lane, RUNCORN, Cheshire, WA7 4SQ
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Registered person	The Park Day Nursery Limited
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?

The Park Day Nursery was registered in 2006. The nursery is owned by a limited company and operates from a converted building situated in Runcorn, Cheshire. Children are cared for within three rooms located on two levels and have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. A maximum of 36 children may attend the nursery at any one time and there are currently 42 children on roll, six of whom are in receipt of funded nursery education. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 all year round. There are eight staff employed in the setting, all of whom hold relevant early years qualifications. The setting receives support from Halton Early Years development consultants.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is appropriately promoted within the setting. Staff have a good understanding of health and safety issues and employ a range of hygienic practices to help reduce the risk of

cross-infection within the nursery. Children are encouraged to learn about how they can keep themselves healthy and well through their everyday routines. For example, as soon as children are able to, they are supported by staff in learning to wash their hands before meals and snacks and after using the toilet, and older children are shown how to wipe their noses and dispose of their tissues hygienically. The setting further safeguards children's health through its clear sickness and medication policies. These explain how parents and staff can work together to protect children's health and keep them comfortable when they are unwell. However, not all staff are clear about the procedures regarding the administration of medication.

Well planned menus and a sound understanding of healthy eating issues effectively ensure that young children have good support for their early growth and development. Children brush their teeth after meals and staff explain why this is important. All children have good access to fluids as their drinking cups are either readily available to them or staff frequently encourage them to have a drink from their cup or bottle. All staff involved in the preparation of food have a clear understanding of how to store and prepare food safely, as they follow the guidelines provided by the environmental health department. Older children are beginning to learn about what being healthy means to them, both through their daily routines and through discussion with staff. For example, staff talk to them about the role that being active and taking exercise plays in keeping them fit and well.

Children's physical development is also appropriately promoted within the setting. Children enjoy active physical play outdoors twice a day and a range of equipment enables them to develop their physical skills and abilities. In addition to the equipment currently provided, staff explained that future plans involve expanding the provision for children's active play through the use of active play consultants visiting the nursery, and also through additional static equipment which will provide more of a challenge for the older children attending. Good settling in procedures and staff's sound understanding of young children's emotional needs ensure that children's emotional well-being is promoted within the setting. Effective use of the key worker system for children aged under three, and warm affectionate relationships between staff and children, ensure that children make secure attachments to the adults caring for them, and are comfortable to explore their surroundings and enjoy their time at nursery.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Parents and children are warmly greeted by staff and made to feel welcome in the setting. The reception area and each home base room provide lots of information for parents, particularly illustrating the types of activities that children are involved in during their time at nursery. Space is appropriately organised to meet children's needs, for example, staff ensure that rooms are darkened and there is minimum disruption during children's sleep periods, and soothing music is used to help children go off to sleep. The provision of lots of appropriate child sized furniture and equipment enhances children's enjoyment, for example, by enabling groups of young children to sit together and share meals, and by enabling staff to safely take children on outings to the local duck pond where they enjoy feeding the ducks.

Although the setting has a range of good quality toys and resources, some areas are better equipped than others. The pre-school room is very well equipped with a wide range of interesting toys and equipment, which are well organised to promote children's independent access and selection. However, in the baby and toddler room, although there are sufficient toys for the number of children attending, the range and organisation of resources is more limited. In particular, resources which promote social and imaginative play are not well developed and, at

times, the organisation of resources does not support young children in making good use of what is available. For example, a number of toys are stored on high shelves rather than within children's easy reach. Resources which promote children's enjoyment of the outdoors are wide ranging and fun, and are stored so that children can easily make their own choices on their way out to play.

Arrangements for keeping children safe within the setting are excellent. Managers and staff work together to create a safe environment, where risks to children's safety are regularly reviewed and effectively minimised. Fire safety is also a high priority within the setting and children and staff regularly practise and record fire evacuation drills. Children are learning about what staying safe means for them through simple age appropriate explanations from staff, for example, linking how they behave to safety. As a result, children understand that following instructions from staff helps to keep them safe. In addition, managers and staff use training to help them improve the arrangements for safety within the setting. For example, following recent health and safety training, a new and improved approach to monitoring accidents within the setting has been devised.

Staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities in relation to child protection issues. They are aware of the range of possible indicators of abuse and neglect and of the procedures they should follow if they have a concern about a child. The settings policy is detailed and shared with staff at induction, and with parents when they enrol their children. This makes clear the nursery's commitment to working closely with parents to keep children safe and free from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy affectionate, positive relationships with their carers. As a result, they generally settle quickly when they arrive at nursery, and are able to enjoy playing with their friends and making the most of the activities provided. Excellent care of young babies enables them to bond with their carers, and feel safe, secure and relaxed in their interaction with staff and other children. Support for young children's language development is also good, as staff spend lots of time talking to children, singing and sharing books with them. Staff make appropriate use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to help them provide satisfactory care and support for children's development. Plenty of information is available through displays and through the written feedback provided by staff at parents evenings. This helps parents understand how the framework is used to support the development of children aged under three years.

Clear plans are in place to ensure that all children take part in a range of activities and experiences which support their development and provide for their enjoyment. Staff extend children's enjoyment and learning through making the most of local amenities, for example, children of all ages, including babies, love going on walks to the local park, where they can feed the ducks and explore the natural world around them. They enjoy collecting things which they can then bring back and use in their creative play. Children are excited about going outside to play and enjoy choosing resources to take outside with them. Good use is made of the outside play area to provide opportunities for children to develop their physical skills and abilities and to play imaginatively with sand and water. There are also plans to develop part of the outside play area as a garden, where children can be involved in planting and growing activities.

Although children are generally happily engaged in their play, there are times when children's play experiences are less fulfilling. For example, in both the baby unit and the toddler room,

children sometimes appear to be wandering around the room, unsure of what they should be doing. At these times, children are more likely to become upset and need reassurance from staff. Although staff are very aware of children's individual dispositions and needs, and use this information well to adapt care arrangements for children, there are times when some staff appear less clear about their role in being directly involved in children's play.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The nursery is still in the early days of implementing the Foundation Stage curriculum as it has only been receiving funding for nursery education since the beginning of the year. At the time of the inspection, a new member of staff has just been employed at the setting to take the lead role in developing the provision of funded education for three year olds. Plans clearly indicate that children are involved in a wide range of activities and experiences which support their progress across the six areas of learning. The pre-school room is very well equipped with good quality, interesting resources, which are all organised to promote children's independent access. Children enjoy exploring and investigating how things work using a range of equipment and tools which they can help themselves to. In addition, children can explore mark making and a variety of art and craft projects, both through planned activities and through their own free play choices. Although children have access to a calculator and a CD player, their access to resources which promote their interest in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is limited, as the computer in the pre-school room is broken.

At present, there is a satisfactory balance between structured adult-lead activities and child-lead learning. Staff use a range of effective teaching techniques to support children's learning, generally making good use of both planned activities and the opportunities that arise through children's everyday routines. For example, children have lots of opportunities to count and use numbers, both through one to one activities with staff and through their everyday routines, as they count the marbles they have earned as rewards for good behaviour. However, opportunities for using numbers to help them calculate or solve problems are less apparent in their everyday activities and routines.

Children listen and follow instructions well. They happily participate in activities and try new things, although most seek support and encouragement from staff. For example, when approaching drawing a tractor, children were unsure of how to begin and needed support from staff in thinking about how they might find out what a tractor looked like to help them begin. They behave well, listening to each other and to staff during small group time, and taking turns and sharing with little prompting. As a result, their behaviour actively supports their learning, allowing them to make the most of the time they spend in nursery. Children also have lots of opportunities to develop their physical skills and abilities and to begin to learn about the role that activity plays in keeping them healthy. As a result, they have good spatial awareness and negotiate obstacles both indoors and outside with ease. Daily access to a variety of art and craft experiences also means that children are developing good manipulative and dexterity skills.

Staff appropriately monitor children's progress through the stepping stones using both structured and spontaneous observations. These are recorded and used in the planning for both group activities and individual children's learning. Parents are kept well informed about children's progress through regular feedback, written reports and more detailed discussion at parents evenings. In the very near future, parents will become more actively involved in monitoring their children's progress as staff will be asking them to contribute their thoughts

and observations to their children's developmental records. Managers and staff continuously evaluate the effectiveness of planned activities in supporting children's learning. They explain that they also work closely with Halton Early Years consultants to help them to develop their implementation of the Foundation Stage curriculum.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

In order to respect and value each child as an individual, the setting works closely with parents from the start of each child's placement to collect detailed information. This helps staff to provide well informed, individual care for children. Staff ensure that children have equal access to resources and activities through encouraging children to share, take turns and include one another in their play. Staff observe children and provide support as needed, to encourage them to take part in activities. Although there are currently no children attending with learning difficulties or disabilities, the setting has a detailed inclusion statement which explains how each child's needs will be promoted, through close partnership with parents and liaison with other agencies involved in children's care. Staff effectively observe children and closely monitor their developmental progress.

The setting actively promotes positive behaviour. Children are encouraged to behave well through praise and encouragement from staff, and a range of motivational strategies are used to reinforce this philosophy. Staff have a sound understanding of how behaviour relates to children's age and stage of development, and they use this effectively to develop strategies to deal with certain kinds of behaviour, for example, how they manage incidents of biting in the toddler room. Close parental involvement in these issues ensures that children are getting consistent messages, and helps them to overcome the problem more quickly. As a result, children generally behave appropriately and play well together, and inappropriate behaviour does not deter children from making appropriate progress in their learning and development.

Partnership with parents is good. Children benefit from the close working partnership between nursery staff and parents. A range of practices ensures that parents are very well informed about the time their child spends in nursery and the progress they are making in relation to their development and learning. For example, they benefit from newsletters, parents questionnaires, three monthly reports and six monthly parents evenings, as well as daily verbal and written feedback. Parents whose children are receiving funded nursery education also get lots of information about the Foundation Stage curriculum, and how it is implemented within the pre-school. Children's reports closely relate to the progress they are making, in relation to the areas of learning and the stepping stones.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Staff provide effective support to enable children to develop a wide range of social skills and good manners through their own examples, as well as gentle reminders. In addition, children learn about other cultures and ways of life through exploring their traditions and celebrations. For example, earlier this year, children enjoyed finding out about how Chinese people celebrate their New year. Managers explain that they are keen to develop children's awareness about the wider world around them, and are looking at how they can extend this topic within the setting to make it interesting and relevant to children's daily lives. Staff act as positive role models to children, showing them how to behave towards one another, encouraging kindness and cooperative play.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management is good. Thorough recruiting and vetting procedures ensure that staff appointed are suitably qualified and experienced. Staff's ongoing suitability is also closely monitored through a range of good managerial and career development procedures. For example, six monthly probationary periods, monitoring of staff performance and access to training all help managers to ensure that staff have good childcare skills and remain suitable to work with young children. Regular room meetings and full staff meetings ensure that staff pool their ideas and learn from one another's experience and support staff in working well as a team and having consistent practices. The setting also maintains good links with Halton Early Years consultants, to help them to keep up to date with developments in early years policies, and for guidance in developing their care and support for young children's development and learning.

Although staff to child ratios are well maintained in the setting, there are times when staff are busy completing ancillary tasks which detract from their contact time with children. The nursery manager explained that staff will be reminded to use quiet times, for example, when children are sleeping, to complete these other tasks. The key worker system is used very effectively within the nursery. Consistent key workers carry out all intimate care tasks for each child, which enables children to make secure attachments to a caring adult and helps them to feel safe and secure and settle quickly into their new routines. In addition, key workers keep children's records up to date and work closely with parents to provide well informed, focused care for children.

A comprehensive range of well written, detailed policies and procedures are in place which very effectively contribute to promoting the welfare, care and learning of children within the setting. These are shared with staff and parents and regularly reviewed and amended in line with the settings practices. Overall, the provision meets the range of the needs of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

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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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):

- ensure that all staff know and understand the policy and procedures regarding the administration of medication
- develop the range, organisation and accessibility of toys and resources for children aged from 1 to 3 years, particularly those which promote social and imaginative play.

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):

- improve children's access to resources which promote an interest in ICT
- make better use of planned activities and daily routines to extend children's problem solving and calculating skills.

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