



Little Pirates at Drake

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY284703
Inspection date	13 June 2005
Inspector	Andrea Caroline Snowden
Setting Address	Drake Infant and Nursery School, Fairfields, Thetford, Norfolk, IP24 1JW
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Registered person	Drake Infant and Nursery School
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?

Little Pirates at Drake is a full day care facility, offering a breakfast club, sessional or full day care, an after school club and a holiday club. It registered in 2004 and operates from a classroom within Drake Infant and Nursery School in Thetford, Norfolk. The school hall, playing field and playground are also used. The setting opens between 07.30 and 17.30.

A maximum of 30 children may attend at any one time and there are currently 126

children on roll. Of these, 28 children are in receipt of funding for nursery education. The setting supports 7 children with special educational needs and 6 children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting is managed by the school governors and five staff members are employed to work with the children. The joint managers and two other staff are suitably qualified and experienced to work with young children.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children in the setting are beginning to learn about personal hygiene as staff help remind them about hand washing routines after using the toilet. A child tells a member of staff that they use soap to kill germs, showing understanding of why good hygiene is important. The staff ensure generally good procedures are in place to minimise the risk of cross infection, however a communal bowl and towel is used before tea time for hand washing, posing a risk of infection to children and adults. Children recognise changes in their bodies and are able to tell staff when they feel poorly or want a rest.

The children are beginning to understand about the benefits of a healthy diet. They help themselves to the water fountain if they are thirsty and have a hot school meal at lunch time. Staff take into account children's dietary needs and provide a good selection of healthy snacks such as cheese, breadsticks and raw vegetables. Children are always offered a healthy option at tea time and the tuck shop also offers them cereal bars, further encouraging them in healthy eating habits.

Children's physical skills are being developed through planned activities and free play outside. They use a selection of small tools such as glue sticks and pens appropriately and enjoy activities which require careful hand eye coordination. They are aware of the space around them and are becoming respectful of other children's space. Children who attend the after school club enjoy playing football and racquet games, whilst younger children play on the large wooden pirate ship and play self initiated games, such as chase. Children who attend the setting all day do not always have access to physical activities, such as ride on toys, balls, hoops and ropes and as a result their physical skills are not always sufficiently extended.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a classroom which is light, bright and safe. It is welcoming to children and provides them with areas to play and rest in safety and encourages them to settle and feel secure. Children use a wide range of play equipment which is clean and safe and appropriate for their needs. There is sufficient variety to ensure that children attending regularly are stimulated and not bored. The children are able to select some activities for themselves promoting their independence and free

choice.

Staff help children learn how to use equipment correctly and as a result children are learning to keep themselves safe in the setting. The after school collections are conducted in an effective manner to ensure children are safe when crossing roads and when travelling on the minibus. Staff are vigilant and talk to children about road safety and wearing seat belts correctly, checking for themselves that children are secure. There are appropriate safety measures in place to promote children's welfare, for example, four staff hold a first aid certificate and daily checks are carried out to ensure the premises remain safe and suitable for use by young children.

The required policies and documentation are in place and staff have a very clear understanding of child protection procedures, which enables them to safeguard the welfare of the children in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children attending the setting are confident and separate from their parents and carers with ease. They quickly and cheerfully involve themselves in the activities, which have been prepared for them. They are forming friendships and enjoy playing self initiated games and role play. Children sing to themselves as they play and are cheerful and happy. Older children know the routines well and there is eager chatter between groups of friends at tea time and when they are involved at activities. Children attending after school ask confidently if they can take activities outside such as Lego and colouring, enabling them to enjoy being outside with other children, but taking part in activities which they prefer. Children who attend the holiday club enjoy a good variety of planned activities, such as treasure hunts, pop corn making and trips out to theme parks and the forest centre, which they find exciting and fun.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound understanding of the foundation stage and most know how children learn effectively. Themed topics are well thought through to ensure they are interesting and meaningful to children. As a result children are keen to become involved in the activities available.

Some activities capture children's imagination and interest for a long period of time, such as the bubble painting where they squeal with delight when the paint bubbles erupt over the pot. Children are usually encouraged to take their time to investigate and concentrate, however on occasion staff are too quick to hurry through the process of craft, rather than allow a child time to complete the activity to his satisfaction. In addition, activities are not always challenging enough for more able children, and although they enjoy painting, sticking and colouring the mini-beasts, the shapes are all pre-cut by an adult and as a result children's learning is not sufficiently extended or challenged.

Overall children are making sound progress in their learning. They are confident in choosing activities and are making friends in the setting. They enjoy counting and

use some mathematical language in their everyday activities. Many know shapes and colours and some are beginning to understand the concept of subtraction through singing number rhymes. Older children are adept at writing their names and they enjoy listening to stories joining in enthusiastically. They are developing the skills needed to listen at group times and are encouraged by staff. Children are generally able to explore and investigate and they enjoy experimenting with straws in the water play, linking their learning to the bubble painting activity and investigating floating and sinking.

Staff have introduced new systems to record children's progress and assessment records now are completed. Information from some observations is used to inform curriculum planning, but the identified next steps for individual children's learning are not. The impact of this is that children are not always effectively challenged or moved on at an appropriate pace.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are learning about the world around them through a variety of topics and some very good resources. There are dressing up costumes, which help children learn about the traditional dress of other countries, whilst photographs and play resources help them learn about the diverse society in which we live. Children's personal care needs are met and staff are proactive to ensure all children are integrated into the group. Children who speak English as an additional language are supported through simple sign language and photographs to enable them to take part in all the activities.

The setting is aware that some children may have special needs and is proactive in ensuring appropriate action is taken when such a child is identified or admitted. Children with special needs are well integrated and participate fully in activities, which are adapted to meet their needs.

Children's behaviour is good. Older children who attend the after school club have been involved in writing the rules and this helps reinforce good behaviour. Staff generally use positive language, and explanations are usually given to children about why behaviour is unacceptable, helping them to learn right from wrong. However this practice is not consistently applied by all staff and as a result some children are dealt with negatively, which has an impact on their self esteem. Children show care and consideration for their environment as they help tidy away the toys and wash up the plates and cups after snack time. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Children benefit from sharing some nursery experiences with their parents as there is a home-link craft activity, which encourages the parents to become involved in their child's learning. Parents can obtain information about the setting through a notice board with information such as staff qualifications and the setting's registration and insurance documents. Parents are given verbal feedback about their child's activities during the day, any achievements and any incidents, but this not consistent. There is little time at the

beginning and end of sessions for staff to approach parents, however if parents approach staff, they are given feedback. There is little information for parents regarding the foundation stage curriculum and what their children are learning and written assessments are not currently shared with parents. As a result children do not benefit fully from their parents being involved in their learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The children are cared for by a qualified staff team which is committed to making improvements. The children have the added security of their key worker to help them with settling in and their daily routines. Policies and procedures in place are sound and are available to parents helping to provide some continuity of care between setting and home, and all the required documentation is in place in order for staff to maintain children's health and welfare. The staff work very hard to ensure ratios are maintained and that staff are deployed to the best of their ability to support the children.

The leadership and management of the setting is satisfactory. Through regular monitoring by way of termly observations, the head teacher evaluates the impact of the provision on the children's learning. A self review is being conducted by staff to enable them to identify strengths and weaknesses of their practice and help them improve the quality of care and education that is offered to children. Overall the setting meets the needs of the children attending.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

On 13 May 2005 concerns were raised relating to standards 11 and 13. These relate to behaviour management and child protection. A visit was conducted on 19 May 2005 and 2 actions were raised under standard 14, following from the investigation. These were to ensure Ofsted is notified of all significant incidents and to ensure that the nursery's policies and procedures are amended to reflect current practice and are followed accordingly; this refers specifically to the child protection and complaints procedures. The provider remains qualified for registration.

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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):

- maintain good hygiene practices by ensuring children do not wash and dry their hands using a communal bowl and towel.
- encourage all staff to routinely use positive language and explanations when dealing with unacceptable behaviour to help children learn right from wrong

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):

- offer activities, which are sufficiently challenging and ensure planning includes some adaptation to meet the needs of children who learn at different paces. Identify the next steps for children's learning when devising curriculum plans.
- improve the partnership with parents to ensure they are aware of the foundation stage curriculum, which their children are following and of the progress their children are making in their learning.

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