

Puddles Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Jennifer Read

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Registered person Desirable Childcare 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Puddles Nursery opened in 2007 and is one of two nurseries owned by Desirable Childcare Limited. It operates from a purpose built building based within the Hesters Way Community Resource Centre, in the Hesters Way area of Cheltenham. The areas available to the children include two playrooms, a sleep room, kitchen and associated facilities. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor-play area with impact absorbent surfaces.

A maximum of 31 children aged between one and five years may attend at any one time. There are currently 33 children on roll. Of these, seven children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 until 18.00 for 50 weeks throughout the year. Children attend from the surrounding areas of Cheltenham. The nursery currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs four staff. Currently all staff hold an appropriate early years qualification. The nursery receives support from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are developing a very good understanding of healthy living and a high level of independence in their personal care. They know how washing their hands at appropriate times and using their individual flannels to wash their face, prevents the spread of germs. Well-planned activities and clear discussion and explanation mean children are learning how to look after their bodies. They know why they use sun cream and wear protective hats during warm weather. The younger children profit from the well-prepared nappy changing routines and the use of gloves and aprons for each child. This minimises cross infection. Children benefit from the scrupulous cleaning systems, excellent monitoring of toys and play items and good example. For example, cleaning checklists for all play areas and weekly and monthly lists for the sterilization of toys ensure children are very well protected from infection.

The clear, accessible health policy together with the useful nappy changing and potty training tips help inform staff, students and parents to enhance children's healthy well-being. Staff act in the best interests of children when they are ill and work closely with parents to meet their individual needs. All staff are trained in first aid and access a well-stocked first aid cabinet to ensure children receive appropriate treatment for minor injuries.

They are developing a secure knowledge of healthy eating habits through eating a balanced diet, drinking water regularly and exploring healthy food through practical themed activities. For example, they make healthy choices by selecting snacks from a varied range of fresh fruit, vegetables and bread sticks. Children take an active part in meal-time routines because staff actively encourage their independence. They competently pour their own drinks, learn to use their knives and forks and serve their own food, deciding on quantity and number of helpings with members of staff available to support if necessary.

Young children rest and relax according to their needs. Staff are attentive to the young children, helping them to become emotionally secure. Children enjoy daily fresh air and suitable opportunities to develop all round muscle control, for instance, in the garden where they climb, slide and balance using the large equipment and apparatus. The staff support and encourage the youngest children well as they practise their walking and learn to use the equipment. Children run and negotiate space and equipment well while pedalling the tricycles and scooters. They readily anticipate using the new parachute exploring what happens when they lift it up and down.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a bright, colourful and spacious setting, where staff give great emphasis to making sure the environment is welcoming for children to aid their development. Murals, photographs and children's pictures decorate the walls, although many of these are too high to enable children to observe and talk about. Both the toddler and pre-school rooms are well set out into defined spaces, such as a comfortable reading area, creative area, table top and floor play area. However, the pre-school room has no writing or mathematical area or specific space for children to explore and investigate natural objects. As a result, they are unable to reach the writing materials and stencils because they are kept on the high window sill.

Children can easily access necessary items like paper towels or their coats, which are on child-height coat pegs. Much of the play equipment is stored invitingly in low-level storage units and many of the draws and storage boxes in the toddler room are nicely labelled with pictorial images to enable the youngest children to select toys for themselves and help to tidy away. This significantly enhances the children's independence and development. Children play happily with an adequate range of equipment, although there are a number of resources which are not available or do not work in the pre-school room. This limits children's enjoyment and learning.

Children's safety and security are given utmost priority by daily rigorous safety checks and risk assessments, which ensure hazards to children are effectively minimised. The use of closed circuit television and video entry phone buzzer system on the entrance ensures the safe arrival and collection of children and monitors visitors to the setting successfully. Staff supervise the children closely indoors and out and implement clear, safe boundaries with the children. They help the young children avoid injury as they learn to walk and they use useful barriers to limit access to dangerous areas. Children show good awareness of the safety rules to keep themselves safe and readily recall them during circle time and throughout the day to help safeguard each other. For example, a child informs their friend, 'we don't run inside, we run outside'. However, infrequent practise of the escape plan means many new children have no awareness of appropriate action to take in an emergency. They are developing a strong sense of responsibility from an early age as they report broken toys to staff as they observe them.

Children are well protected from abuse and neglect as the staff have a professional understanding of child protection issues. All staff have completed child protection training and although the policy does not include reference to reporting allegations to the regulator, staff are all clear about their responsibilities to observe, record and report should they have any concerns for a child in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

The toddlers and tots children enjoy calm, relaxing activities that offer opportunities for them to play alone, alongside their peers or to join in adult-led activities. They take part in a broad range of stimulating activities because staff in the toddler room have a sound understanding of the Birth to three matters framework and a secure knowledge of children's individual needs and interests. As a result, children in the toddlers and tots room are making good progress. Daily observations and up-to-date assessments link closely to the successful planning and termly progress reports for parents. However, this does not continue for children in the pre-school room, resulting in frequently missed opportunities to develop ideas, skills and children's interests.

Children are happy and settle generally well because staff greet them warmly on arrival. They all play co-operatively at the beginning of the day as they play with the trains, simple slot-in puzzles, cooker and building blocks. The younger children develop confidence because staff interact and actively encourage their exploration of different textures, which stimulate their senses, for example, investigating the smells of different herbs and the feel of various materials and objects in the treasure drawer. They enjoy experimenting with the paint using their fingers, pine cones or small paint brushes and explore how it feels to paint their lips green, patting their lips together as it begins to dry.

The younger children enjoy special time with a familiar staff member as they share books. They squeal with delight as they imitate horse actions with staff, starting to play imaginatively. They enjoy story sacks and joining in music and movement, dressing-up, play dough, noodle play and decorating three-dimensional bumble bees to develop their hand and eye co-ordination and broaden their experiences.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Children's progress towards the early learning goals is hindered by a number of significant weaknesses in teaching. For example, children are not sufficiently challenged because staff lack experience, training and a secure understanding of the early learning goals and how to implement them. Staff demonstrate little awareness of children's next steps and understanding of how to support those children for whom English is an additional language is limited. Planning does not cover all areas of learning sufficiently or meet the individual needs of the children. Observations of children's play and assessment records are not completed to effectively inform and guide planning, resulting in challenges being inappropriate to individual stages of development. Consequently, children are not inspired in their play and learning. Children have no opportunity to take an active part in planning their play and staff rarely respond to children's ideas.

Staff sometimes join in children's play to help develop their creative skills. Some useful questioning helps to engage them for periods of time but routines and activities are not consistently well-planned or organised, meaning children wait around becoming restless. For example, little initiative is used to engage children while waiting for their snack or during the cooking activity.

Children are confident in the setting and are developing their relationships with each other and staff. Although some children require a lot of adult guidance and support with sharing and turn taking during chosen activities, adult-led activities and daily routines. Children are encouraged to develop independence by helping to fill up the water tray, helping themselves to a drink at snack time and managing their personal care. They are learning to care for their environment by helping with planting and weeding and care for each other. For instance, a more able child offers to help another child do up their shoe lace.

Children have some opportunities to recognise their written names and one or two children are able to refer to these when finding their coat peg and very occasionally their named drawer. Pictorial clues are available for those children not able to recognise their written name. No specific writing area or free access to writing materials in the role-play or outside chalking area means children have very few opportunities to practise and develop their emergent writing skills, both in adult-led and free-play activities. Some labelling of areas and an alphabet poster are displayed to enable children to observe print in the environment. However, they have very few resources and opportunities to develop letter recognition, link letters and sounds and to hear and use new words during activities.

Children that are more able are using basic mathematical language appropriately to describe and compare the size of farm animals in the toddler room. For example, a child exclaims, 'this is the mummy one and this is the baby one, this is the bigger one' holding up the biggest animal. Occasional useful questioning from staff, such as, 'we've drunk three, how many are left?' support children's awareness of number. However, opportunity for children to hear, say and use numbers during play and daily routines, such as using the colourful number chart,

counting the numbers of children present and comparing numbers of boys and girls present does not take place.

Children show pride as they design and make models using manufactured construction sets and household recyclable materials. However, children have very few opportunities to use everyday technology or programmable toys in their play and during planned activities because batteries have run out and the resources are still being developed. Children show interest in natural objects and those that are more able respond eagerly to questioning from toddler room staff when observing pine cones. They describe the colour, texture, saying 'it's bumpy', and use their imagination to compare it to familiar objects, such as a brush. Children have inconsistent opportunities to understand about the passing of time. They observe tadpoles and use books and posters to talk about life cycles. However, they do not identify the day of the week, yesterday, or tomorrow every day and teaching methods are not supportive. For example, children are told to wait eight minutes if they want to play with something, however, no clock or timer is available to enable children to observe the passing of time.

Children enjoy using the apparatus and equipment, although free-flow indoor and outdoor play is restricted because the pre-school share it with the younger children and recruitment of additional staff is still to take place. Children negotiate space well and use all equipment competently, although staff do not provide sufficient challenge to adapt the resources and activities for the more able children to extend their physical skills further. Children are not encouraged to be aware of what is happening to their bodies as they exercise and learn how to keep themselves healthy.

Children show interest in a suitable range of creative activities that stimulate their interests. For instance, the planning shows children explore the properties of play dough, noodles, draw from still life and paint for a purpose. Although, opportunity to discover what happens when they mix different colours together does not take place. They use their imagination generally well in their role-play, for example, pretending to go the pet shop and being Spot the dog. Children enjoy occasional music and singing to practise familiar songs and rhymes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's individual care needs are well met because staff liaise closely with parents and identify and record useful information to provide suitable care. Although no children currently attend, the manager and deputy have experience and a sound knowledge of the issues surrounding the care of children with special needs. The younger children are developing strong bonds with familiar staff. This helps children feel secure.

The staff adopt a professional approach to provide an inclusive environment. For example, the manager seeks advice and learns important words and simple phrases in the languages relevant to the children attending. However, these are not known or used daily by appropriate staff to help those children feel a sense of belonging and promote their confidence. Little information is known by pre-school staff about children's attainment on entry to provide adequate support. As a result, they play by themselves most of the time spending much time in one area. A translation service is available for parents on request to help their understanding of the nursery policies and paperwork and to help them feel a part of the nursery. Children access a small range of resources, which help them value diversity. However, very occasional use of the local community and infrequent planned activities relating to children's own and other cultures and

customs is not increasing their awareness of the wider world sufficiently. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not fostered.

Children are confident, mostly settled and know the routines well. Younger children benefit from a more relaxed atmosphere where they are gaining self-assurance because staff are very sensitive, positive and enthusiastic. Children respond well to frequent praise and are generally well behaved. Most take turns and play co-operatively because staff are mainly consistent in their implementation of the clear behaviour policy and boundaries. However, some mixed messages in the pre-school rooms, such as running inside, are confusing children's understanding of right and wrong. Older children are learning to manage their own behaviour through occasional reinforcement of the pre-school rules. Some children readily recall why they do not play near the doors as they may trap their fingers.

Children benefit from the friendly relationships and informal contact between their parents and staff. Parents value the friendliness of staff and feel they are welcoming. Displays within the nursery provide parents with adequate information about menu plans, policies and procedures. Photographs of the staff and their qualifications enable parents to communicate with familiar people. Parents of children in the toddler room receive very good information about the Birth to three matters framework and are well informed about their child's achievements and development. For instance, three monthly clear, regular progress reports, use of the home to nursery daily diary and access to their child's development record encourage parents' involvement in their child's play and learning.

The partnership with parents and carers is inadequate. Parents receive essential information about the nursery's provision when their child enrolls in the setting. However, they receive no information about the education provision and useful ways to encourage parents to be involved in their child's learning have not been devised. For example, there are no planned opportunities for parents to share concerns or what they know about their child. A timetable of daily routines is displayed in the pre-school room, but information about children's activities and how their progress across the six areas of learning links to the stepping stones is not available. This limits parents' understanding of the curriculum and how their children build on what they already know and can do. Daily diary sheets are not used for every child, every day and are placed in the child's drawer. Parents show little awareness of this procedure, therefore missing out on useful information about their child's day.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The leadership and management of the setting is inadequate. There are significant differences in the learning and activities available to the younger children in the toddler room compared to the limited learning experiences for children in the pre-school room. The registered person has little effect on improving teaching and children's learning through little involvement with the setting and inconsistent support to the management. The deployment of staff to utilise training and experience of the Foundation Stage is inefficient and suitable systems to support staff have been weak. Consequently, the education provision lacks direction, the teaching has significant weaknesses and children are making little progress from their individual starting points.

The planning does not reflect children's individual needs, interests or sufficiently challenge what they already know and can do across all six areas of learning. Systems to monitor the planning, activities, resources and assessments are inadequate leaving many gaps in children's

learning. Staff are uncertain about what children are to learn from the activities they provide. This results in children being occupied rather than actively engaged in learning.

Children benefit from careful organisation of play areas and resources to encourage independent learning. Although little emphasis has been given to ensure there are specific areas for children to write, investigate and explore and to operate everyday technology. Children are generally happy and relaxed because staff are friendly and work co-operatively together to facilitate children's individual care needs.

Staff are committed to attend training in their own time and during working hours to enhance their skills and knowledge. Although delays in attending training on the Foundation Stage has had a significant impact in children's learning and experiences. The operational plan is mostly complete and reflects new legislation. Recruitment and induction procedures are rigorous resulting in staff's secure understanding of the nursery policies and procedures. Documentation and records are accurate, clear and maintained to a high standard. The staff store all confidential information securely and all regulatory documentation is in place. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable as this was the first inspection.

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.

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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):

- take positive steps to promote all children's safety through regular practise of the escape plan so that new children learn safe, appropriate action to take in an emergency.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- improve staffs knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn to enhance and extend children's learning.
- devise a system for the observation and assessment of children's progress towards the early learning goals and ensure this links closely to the planning and children's next steps.
- plan a stimulating curriculum that covers all areas of development with clear learning outcomes relevant to the children and provide opportunities for children to plan and organise their free play to ensure that they are adequately engaged throughout the day.
- improve systems for monitoring the quality of the nursery education provision and evaluating its impact, especially in relation to the progress of more able and less able children.
- provide parents with information about the Foundation Stage curriculum to enable them to fully understand and contribute to their children's learning.

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

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