

Playaway Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	303448
Inspection date	30 July 2007
Inspector	Jane Shaw
Setting Address	Grasmere Drive, Beechwood, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 2TT
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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?

Playaway Day Nursery is one of two provisions registered to the same provider. It opened in 1993 and operates from purpose built premises in Beechwood, Runcorn, Cheshire.

A maximum of 67 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 79 children aged from birth to under five years on roll. Of these, 31 children receive funding for early education. Children attending are mainly from the local area. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 20 staff. Of these 18 including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications and a further two members of staff are working towards a qualification.

As the nursery is in receipt of funding for early education, they have access to advisory staff from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is satisfactorily promoted. Staff encourage children to wash their hands after using the toilet and before meals and snacks. Older children are independent in this task, with younger children being offered assistance from staff. Staff have appropriate routines and procedures in place during nappy changing, having access to aprons and disposable gloves and by the sanitising of changing mats after use. The regular checking of toilet areas for hygiene and cleanliness is not in place and leads to odour problems. Staff follow suitable sickness and exclusion procedures so that children are protected when they are ill and share an appropriate sick child policy with parents and carers. This ensures children are cared for within an environment which is as free from infection as possible. A high number of staff are trained in first aid, which ensures children's accidents are dealt with appropriately. Appropriate systems are in place for the recording of accidents and the administration of medication. These are well maintained and shared with parents and carers ensuring they are kept up to date with their child's care and general well-being.

Children benefit from eating a healthy, nutritious and well balanced diet. A qualified cook prepares a variety of home cooked meals for the children to enjoy, using fresh ingredients on a daily basis. For example, children thoroughly enjoy home cooked chicken curry and rice. Children are offered fresh fruit on a regular basis, and drinking water is readily available in all rooms. At mealtimes children sit in small groups with staff support. Children make choices about their food and how they would like this to be served. For example, staff ask children if they want their chicken curry to be placed on top of the rice or at the side. The cook has recently received a triple star award for the cleanliness of the kitchen.

Children's physical health is satisfactorily promoted as they use the outdoor play space when weather permits. Staff support the needs of babies and young children well, assisting them to gain control of their bodies as they learn to crawl, stand and walk.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for within rooms according to their age. These rooms are appropriately furnished and resourced. For example, the under two-year-old room is divided into two separate areas for mobile and non mobile children. The nursery is welcoming to children, parents and carers with plenty of displays of the children's work and posters within group rooms and the entrance area.

Children have access to a range of resources and furniture to enable them to relax, play and eat in comfort. Resources are age appropriate and shared between rooms. Toys, equipment and the décor within the pre-school room is to be updated within the next month.

Good staff ratios ensures children are well supervised and safe during their nursery day. Risk assessments are carried out on premises on a daily basis as staff open up and close the nursery, however, some socket covers are missing in Jelly Tots room. The outdoor area is carefully checked prior to children's use. These measures ensure children's safety at all times. A designated member of staff takes responsibility for health and safety issues. Accidents are accurately recorded showing specific details, however, existing injuries to children are not consistently

recorded upon arrival. Children are beginning to learn about safety issues and how to keep themselves safe, for example, as staff remind them to use scissors correctly. Pre-school children explain that it is important to only answer to their own name during register time so that staff know who is there in case there is a fire.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff show an awareness of child protection issues and the procedures to follow should any concerns be identified. Staff are clear of the procedures to be followed, whistle blowing, and how they would deal with poor staff practice. An appropriate child protection policy is in place, but lacks some detail in relation to information regarding allegations against staff. Children and staff attendance registers are accurately maintained, however, the presence of visitors within the building is not consistently recorded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children are happy, settled and enjoy their time at the nursery. Good staff ratios ensure children are well supported throughout their day. Staff show care and interact positively with the children, for example, as they join children in outdoor play. Staff encourage children to be confident and independent. Good relationships between staff and children are clearly seen throughout the nursery.

Staff have implemented the 'Birth to three matters' framework well across the nursery. Staff have a good understanding of the framework and are confident in how to use this to offer children access to opportunities. Staff take the lead from children, by allowing children to make choices about their play. Staff provide activities and access to resources following children's interests. For example, within 'Jelly Tots' staff offer children activities associated with holidays, after children talk about having been on holiday.

Babies are also involved in activities which are offered following their particular interest. Babies and younger children are offered a range of sensory play activities, for example, they enjoy water play, sand, gloop, pasta play and large group painting, using their hands and feet. Non mobile babies have access to toys and equipment placed near to them and a short distance away encouraging the development of hand eye coordination and movement.

Staff make observations and keep developmental records in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework using photographs to support their comments. These records are shared with parents and carers, who are encouraged to make comments about their children's development and progress.

Toddlers enjoy acting out favourite stories, such as 'We're going on a bear hunt', using a variety of resources and materials. Children enjoy listening to stories about sea creatures and create collage whales.

Pre-school children enjoy a good range of interesting activities and play experiences, which are planned in line with the Foundation Stage curriculum. Staff who work with pre-school children have a good understanding of the curriculum and how children learn.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff use the Foundation Stage curriculum to offer children access to a range of interesting activities across all six areas of learning. Staff only plan focussed adult led activities twice per day, concentrating on child initiated play

opportunities. Staff prefer to plan focussed activities which are planned at the beginning of the day. This system allows more time for staff to interact with children and releases them from detailed planning. Staff feel that they have found an acceptable balance. Focussed activities are planned by key workers for their particular group of children, however, all children are able to join different groups if they wish to. Children look forward to and get excited about activity times.

Most children arrive happy and settled, showing an eagerness and excitement to involve themselves in the activities offered. Any children who are unsettled are gently supported by staff. Children are confident and able to speak in front of others in large and small groups. Children are developing good relationships with one another and the adults who care for them. Children are becoming independent as they deal with personal tasks and as they make informed choices about their play. Most children sit quietly within activities and at story times allowing others to listen and participate.

Children are becoming skilful communicators and confidently talk about themselves and their families. Children make suggestions about activities and negotiate roles and responsibilities during imaginary play with one another. Sentences are well constructed, their vocabulary is good and words are used in context, children use storyboard jigsaws successfully. Children's language for thinking and communication is developing through activities that encourage them to think, for example, they are asked to describe what flour feels like when making play dough and what will happen when oil and water is added. Children are able to make marks, with many children being able to write their own names.

Children are beginning to develop an understanding of number and number operations, for example, at snack time a child divides the remaining segments of a

Satsuma into two groups of two, telling a member of staff that two and two is four. However, staff do not make use of everyday spontaneous opportunities, such as circle time and snack time, to further develop children's understanding of numbers and number operations.

The programme for knowledge and understanding of the world involves the children in a range of activities. Children's early science is well promoted through planned activities and access to a variety of resources. For example, children experiment considering what sinks and floats, are involved in creating volcanoes and watching what happens when ice melts. Children skilfully use a computer keyboard and mouse and other technological equipment. They are able to build three-dimensional models from a variety of construction equipment. Children are developing an understanding of the wider world through varied themes of work.

Children's physical development is promoted as they participate in weekly sessions within the local school during term time, where they practise climbing, balancing and other large skills. During school holidays children have access to obstacle courses within the pre-school room. During these sessions, staff discuss health issues with children, getting children to think about what is happening to their breathing and heart during exercise. The provision of outdoor play and resources is somewhat limited.

Displays show children use a variety of textures and techniques in their art and craft work, for example, collage, black and white pictures and weaving. Children have access to a dedicated art area. Children listen to music and play musical instruments during sessions. Children's imaginary skills are developing through access to role play areas which are changed regularly

and through their own spontaneous role play. For example, when using paint brushes and water outdoors, children decide to use these to develop a car wash and clean the bicycles.

Staff offer children the opportunity to make choices about their play during child initiated play times, and to engage with staff in more focussed activities. Staff make observations at focussed activities and spontaneously throughout sessions. These observations are used to complete assessment records and transition documents. They are also used by staff to plan the next steps for children's learning. Staff plan additional activities to enable children to revisit skills to consolidate their learning. Staff also use photographic evidence to support observations and records of achievements. Records are regularly shared with parents and carers, who are encouraged to make comments on their child's progress and achievements. Staff are to introduce learning objective sheets so that staff are aware of the objectives of activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and respected as individuals and relevant information is obtained from parents and carers regarding their child's specific needs. This enables staff to plan for and meet their specific needs, for example, sleeping and feeding patterns for babies. Children are beginning to learn about diversity through a selection of planned activities, for example, as they celebrate festivals and access resources, such as play figures, books and posters. Several staff have been identified to work with children with particular needs. They have undertaken appropriate training and work together to support children with particular needs and one another as a staff team.

Children's behaviour is generally good. Staff are good role models and use positive strategies to manage children's behaviour effectively, but there is no designated staff member responsible for behaviour management issues. Staff consistently use a good level of praise and encouragement to reinforce positive behaviour. Interaction between staff and with children is positive. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is appropriately fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good and staff develop open and friendly relationships with them. Parents are kept informed about their children and the operation of the nursery, for example, through daily diary sheets for younger children, newsletters and information on notice boards. Communication between staff, parents and carers was seen to be friendly and appropriate and those spoken to were positive about what the nursery offers their children.

Parents and carers of children within pre-school have access to information on the educational provision as well as information on activities, which is displayed on the notice board adjacent to the pre-school area. Staff give verbal feedback to parents and carers as they collect their children at the end of their day. Staff also keep developmental records and photographic records of children's development and achievements, which are available at all times for parents and carers to view. These records are regularly shared with parents and carers, who are asked to make comments on their child's development.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Effective procedures are in place for the recruitment and vetting of staff to ensure their suitability to work with children. Good staffing ratios positively supports children's care, learning and play. The key worker system works well in practice across the whole nursery, to promote

children's development as an individual and as small groups. A high proportion of staff are qualified in early years and they have access to ongoing training to enhance their knowledge and skills.

Policies and procedures are in place, along with a staff handbook and information for parents and carers. Relevant documentation that relates to the children's care and well-being, along with appropriate parental consents are in place.

Leadership and management of the pre-school is good. Staff work well together to plan for children and discuss issues with managers and the registered provider on a regular basis. The registered provider is accessible at all times and visits the setting daily to support staff and children. The senior management team are committed to the ongoing development and improvement of the educational provision and have plans in place to improve the resources and pre-school room in the next few weeks.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, a number of issues were identified as areas for improvement which related to: safety issues; the provision of activities for babies; the development of a key worker system; the promotion of children's independence and emergency arrangements.

All of these issues have been appropriately addressed. Staff have implemented a system of risk assessing to ensure children's safety. Daily opening up and closing down checks are done along with the careful checking of the outdoor play space prior to use. Staff working with babies offer children access to a range of appropriate activities and opportunities planned in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework which has been implemented across the nursery.

A key worker system has been implemented for all children within the nursery. The system works well and benefits the children in terms of their individual care and access to activities and opportunities. Older children are encouraged to be independent during their day, having the opportunity to pour drinks for themselves at meal and snack times. Staff have obtained parental consent for the seeking of emergency medical treatment for all children.

Following the last funded nursery education inspection, four key issues were raised. The registered provider was asked to ensure that gaps identified through assessments clearly show how this information is used for planning and encourage parents to contribute towards their children's assessments. Staff have recently introduced a system which focuses more on child initiated play, with only minimal adult led activities. Staff are able to use these focussed activities to plan activities to promote specific skills on a group and individual basis. Parents and carers contribute towards children's assessments by completing information prior to children starting and as staff share their child's developmental record with them.

Staff were asked to ensure that the children can access activities freely to explore, investigate and experiment to see how and why things happen and consolidate learning. Sessions are mainly child initiated activities, where staff take the lead from the children in terms of activities and experiences. Children have the opportunity to freely select toys and resources for themselves, staff make resources available and support children in their chosen activities. Children are able to use resources to investigate, for example, children choose magnifying glasses to look at chosen items.

The registered provider was also asked to ensure that all the staff are aware of the objectives they are going to achieve from an activity. Staff have ceased undertaking detailed planning, planning only for small group activities with their identified key worker group. This planning is done each morning. Staff are planning on introducing a learning intentions sheet to enable all staff to be aware of the objectives of activities and continuous provision.

The final key issue was for the implementation of a system through which staff training needs are identified and monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the provision for the nursery education. Group room and full staff meetings are in place, along with appraisals where training needs are identified. Staff are offered opportunities to enhance their skills and knowledge through regular training opportunities.

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.

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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):

- ensure staff implement the regular checking of toilets areas for hygiene
- ensure a visitors record is consistently kept. Amend the child protection policy and ensure staff record existing injuries to children upon arrival
- ensure there is a named person with responsibility for behaviour management.

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):

- make use of everyday spontaneous opportunities to develop children's understanding of numbers and number operations
- develop the outdoor space and provision of resources to enhance children's outdoor experiences and play opportunities.

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