

# Playmates Nurseries Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	303449
<b>Inspection date</b>	16 October 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Susan Patricia Birkenhead
<b>Setting Address</b>	136 Hough Green Road, Widnes, Cheshire, WA8 4PG
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 424 2486
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Playmates Nurseries Ltd
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

Playmates '2' day nursery is one of two nurseries owned and managed by Playmates Nurseries Ltd. It opened in 2000 and operates from a converted two storey house close to the centre of Widnes. A maximum of 40 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 52 children aged from nought to under five years on roll. Of these 12 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide area. There are no children on roll with learning difficulties or disabilities and no children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 13 staff, of these 11 staff, hold appropriate early years qualifications and one staff is working towards a higher qualification.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children's good health is positively promoted due to the many effective practices and procedures incorporated into the daily routines. Children learn the importance of washing their hands at appropriate times and older children confidently explain why they do this, 'because you get germs on your hands'. They learn about dental hygiene and clean their teeth after lunch. Staff consistently adhere to the cleaning routines and regularly use hand sanitizer in between washing their hands. Both children and staff change into indoor shoes or slippers daily. The detailed sickness policy and posters on display reflect the effective nursery procedures and assist staff and parents in the identification of illness, such as, Meningitis. Therefore, children are cared for within an environment that protects them from the risk of infection. A very consistent approach is in place for recording accidents, incidents and medication. Records are detailed and shared with parents. The rolling programme of first aid training attended ensures a good proportion of staff are qualified in first aid, which contributes to the safeguarding of children's welfare.

All children have various opportunities to develop their physical skills, both indoors and outdoors. They use the climbing apparatus outdoors and stilts, to develop their climb and balancing skills. They take part in games the staff organise developing skills such as, running, hopping and jumping. Older children are beginning to recognise the effects physical exercise has on their overall well-being. They talk about feeling 'tired' and 'sweating' following the more physical games. Children develop their fine, physical skills during the indoor activities, which include manipulating the 'flubber' and using cutting tools with skill. Children have opportunities to express themselves through music and movement sessions held. Babies practice their walking skills with staff support and the positioning of attractive play materials encourages children to crawl. They experience fresh air regularly as they go for walks within the local community and access the outdoor play area twice daily. Therefore, children learn to develop good coordination and control of their bodies.

Children enjoy a varied, balanced and nutritional diet in the main, which is outlined in the rotating menu on display, taking into account their dietary needs and developmental stage. Meals are mostly prepared using fresh produce and very occasionally incorporate children's favourites using processed foods. However, the hygiene standard is compromised during the preparation of snack because the fruit is chopped on the table surface within the rooms and children are not provided with plates or dishes. Children have access to drinking water, which they can access independently or with support. Meal times positively contribute to the development of children's social interaction as children sit in smaller groupings with staff and engage in conversation. They share books and discuss aspects of a healthy lifestyle and recognise foods which are good for them.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children on the whole benefit from the positive use of the facilities which contribute to the very welcoming and secure environment. The organisation of separate areas within the rooms, for messy play, quiet times and role-play enable the children to relax, sleep and play in comfort. The positive planning and preparation of rooms daily enables the children to access play materials on arrival. The children's group rooms are attractively decorated using children's artwork and

a very good level of information is on display, which includes the Foundation Stage curriculum and the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Therefore, contributing to the children's sense of belonging. However, due to the design of the toilet areas for example, doors are not fitted to the individual cubicles, children's privacy and dignity is not always respected.

Children have access to a wide range of good quality play materials and natural resources to support, extend, challenge their learning and meet their needs well. These contribute to the bright and stimulating nursery environment. Resources are regularly rotated to ensure children's interest is sustained, which supports their learning and enjoyment. Children self select toys and equipment during specified times or through the continuous provision, which positively supports the development of their independence skills and assists in consolidating their learning effectively.

Children are cared for within an environment where their safety is supported by good staff ratios and the use of safety equipment, for example, reflective jackets and identity bracelets are worn during outings. The provision of resources, the risk assessments and daily safety checks following the rota displayed, ensure positive steps are taken to further minimise risks to children. Children learn about safe evacuation as they practise drills regularly. Children learn to keep themselves safe because the staff make them aware of unsafe practices and the consequences of their actions.

Children's welfare is given high priority. Staff have a good understanding of the procedures for safeguarding children's welfare. They clearly recognise the signs to look for and recall the designated person appointed for child protection within the setting.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are happy, secure and very confident within the nursery environment. They are made to feel welcome by staff on arrival and they separate from their parents and carers confidently. Children are developing good relationships with staff because of the key worker system and the positive level of interaction. As a result, children eagerly participate in play and activities and are becoming competent learners, readily seeking support from staff when necessary. Children move confidently between the play and activities organised. They have opportunities during free choice to select play materials therefore, from an early age they begin to take responsibility for their own learning and enjoyment.

Children enjoy planned activities, which are supported by a range of resources, including a very good supply of natural materials to cover a wide variety of sensory play experiences. They have opportunities to play freely explore their environment, be active and relax or sleep according to their developmental needs. They play imaginatively, build using construction materials, listen to stories and sing their favourite songs. Children enjoy baking and have twice daily access to the garden area for outdoor play. Activities are planned around themes, such as, 'all about me' and 'people who help us' and incorporate spontaneous opportunities. Staff have developed a good understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework, which is shared with parents. As a result, the children benefit from the broad range of play and activities planned, which are linked to the framework, to promote their learning, overall development and enjoyment. Older children have access to a wide range of creative experiences appropriate to their age and stage of development.

Babies develop an awareness of themselves as they study their reflection in the mirror. They freely access natural materials from the good variety of treasure baskets and take part in minimal creative experiences, such as hand painting. They develop their communication skills effectively as they point to indicate what they want, which staff are very responsive to. Staff complete observations of the children's developmental achievements based on the 'Birth to three matters' framework, both in written and photographic form. However, some entries to these records are not dated to monitor children's progress. Parents receive three monthly reports, which they can contribute to by making their own comments.

#### Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The pre-school room leader has a very good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and, as a result, other staff have a secure understanding. They work together to plan a broad and balanced range of activities, which are linked to the 'Foundation Stage' curriculum. The planning records reflect children's intended learning, the theme they follow, incorporate differentiation according to children's individual abilities and evaluations completed. Staff develop positive techniques to extend and challenge children's learning through their interaction and questions they ask. As a result, children are focused, interested and show excitement in their learning. Key worker staff complete regular observations of the children, which are used to inform their developmental assessments and plan for the next steps in their learning. The end of year reports, assessment books and the local authority transitional documents effectively monitor children's developmental progress.

Children are forming very good relationships with adults, one another, and as a result positive friendships are developing. One child politely asks another if they can look at the book they have brought from home. They play well together and when playing with the building blocks suggest 'shall we share' and thank staff for the house they make for them. They fondly recall children who have left the setting as they look back on entries made to the book which accompanies 'Rosie dog', which children can take home and record their adventures with her. Children have opportunities to develop their personal independence, which include changing their shoes and putting their coats on when going out to play. However, opportunities to further promote their independence are not built upon during meal times. They are becoming confident communicators as they engage in conversations with adults and other children at small group time when discussing their news. They recognise their name cards at registration and many children confidently sound out the letters that form their name. As a result of the well resourced writing materials and the display of written words within the setting supported by pictures, children learn to give meaning to print and practice their writing skills. Children's understanding of books is developing well because they are attentive at story time, responsive to positive interaction, prompting them to recall aspects of familiar stories. They visit the book area independently, sit quietly and turn the pages to retell the story in their own way.

Children are developing a very good understanding of mathematics, through activities and spontaneous opportunities during everyday situations. Children hold up three fingers when asked how old they are. They accurately count the number of children present to eight at circle time and older children count well beyond 10 spontaneously when sorting the buttons. They discuss shape as they talk about the crackers at snack being round or square and make comparisons between written numbers, objects and then record the number for themselves as part of an activity in the maths area.

Opportunities for children to explore and investigate are suitably developed through the themes they follow, the continuous provision of resources and spontaneous opportunities. They show

interest in the spider that staff capture outdoors and use the magnifying box to look at it. Children have access to many resources to develop their awareness of technology, which include a digital camera, tape recorded and remote control items, such as the 'Dinosaur'. They develop their understanding of the natural world as items they plant in the garden include carrots and sunflowers, nurturing and watching them grow. Opportunities for children to learn about the local community are incorporated into the planning. For example, they visit the library on the bus and involve visitors, such as the police and a representative from the school crossing patrol. Daily opportunities allow children to engage in many creative activities using a variety of resources. Children express themselves using paint as they recreate a picture of the hamster. Children talk about colour at regular intervals during the day and use the home made snap cards to compare and match colours correctly.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

All children are positively encouraged to participate in the activities provided because the staff have a clear understanding of equality of opportunity. Staff gather relevant information on the children's individual needs and care requirements to ensure a positive and consistent approach to their care. Good quality resources are available to represent positive images of diversity, such as gender correct dolls, books, posters and play figures. Children's understanding of the wider world is developed effectively because they celebrate numerous festivals through activities and food tasting. The policy in place supports and welcomes children with learning difficulties or disabilities into the setting and a designated person is appointed. Where necessary one to one support is provided and individual educational programmes are developed with close liaison with parents and outside agencies.

Children behave very well and learn about appropriate behaviour through positive staff interaction and support. They receive regular and consistent verbal praise and encouragement from the staff. Incentives, such as, stickers are used for rewarding good behaviour and achievements, which has a positive impact on the development of the children's confidence and self-esteem. Children are polite, share, take turns and are learning from a young age to cooperate and show consideration for others. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered appropriately, because of the positive role models the staff represent.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Children benefit from the positive exchange of information between parents, carers and the staff. All parents receive verbal and written information about their child's day upon collection sharing details of their well-being. Parents receive a good level of information regarding the setting, which includes the policies, procedures and written information when their children move rooms. The very informative display boards make them aware of the Foundation Stage curriculum, the 'Birth to three matters' framework, and the staff employed. Effective home links are developed through the newsletters issued and parent's evenings. Parent's comment that they are happy with the care and education their children receive and confirm the level of information they receive.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are protected because of the robust systems in place for selecting, recruiting and the clearance of all staff. The good staff ratios deployed and the high number of qualified staff contributes to the good standard of care. Staff show a commitment to attending additional

training to develop their knowledge, skills and disseminate information to other members of the staff team. This has a positive impact on children's learning, development and welfare and ensures that they are cared for by staff who are up to date with current practises and childcare initiatives.

The written policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and contain detailed information relating to the nursery practices, which contribute to the operational plan. All legally required documentation that contributes to the children's health, safety and well-being is consistently completed by staff throughout the nursery.

The leadership and management are good. The registered persons who are also the managers are very clear about their role and recognise the importance of continuous development. Individual responsibilities are delegated to the senior staff effectively. The managers and room supervisors undertake regular monitoring of the provision through meetings held which include 'one to one sessions' with staff where they look at performance, training and development. They complete regular evaluations and identify areas for development.

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

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

During the last care inspection the provider was asked to continue to develop the promotion of positive images for children under three. Since the last inspection additional resources, such as posters and play materials have been introduced to further promote children's understanding of diversity through play.

During the last education inspection the provider was asked to increase the range of print available to children in the role play activities. Since the last inspection this has been addressed and areas are now labelled with written word and number to further promote their understanding of the meaning of print.

### **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.

## **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 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 the current hygiene procedures for the preparation and serving of snacks
- ensure children's privacy and dignity is respected when using the toilet facilities.

### **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):

- further extend opportunities for children to develop their self-help skills during snacks and meal times.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)