

The Children's Place Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	311273
Inspection date	07 September 2007
Inspector	Helen Blackburn
Setting Address	Netherfield Rd, Ravensthorpe, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, WF13 3JY
Telephone number	01924 430292
E-mail	
Registered person	The Children's Place Ltd
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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?

The Children's Place Limited is one of seven nurseries, two of which have out of school provisions, managed by the directors of Children's Place Limited Company. The nursery registered in 1994 and became a Sure Start Children's Centre in 2004. The nursery and children's centre services operate on a campus model, based within in a purpose-built building situated in the Ravensthorpe area of Dewsbury. A maximum of 66 children may attend the centre at any one time. The centre is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00, 51 weeks of the year, providing full-time and part-time sessions. A holiday club caters for children up to eight years, during the local school holidays. Services establishing within the children's centre provide links to a variety of information, including drop-in support sessions for parents, carers and their families. All children share access to secure, enclosed outdoor play areas.

There are currently 71 children on roll from two months to eight years, of these 33 children receive funding for early education. Children attend from the local catchment area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties, disabilities or who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 16 members of childcare staff and supporting staff, including cooks and cleaners. Of the childcare staff, 15 hold appropriate early years qualifications and four are working towards further qualifications. The nursery is a member of the National Day Nursery Association. They have achieved a quality assurance award through the National Day Nursery Association, Investors in People, Calderdale and Kirklees Kickstart for Equality, Kirklees Healthy Eating Award and Kirklees Childcare Affiliation. The centre work closely with the local authority and the children's centre advisory teacher.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children are cared for in a clean environment. The staff maintain this through carrying out good hygiene practices, such as regular cleaning routines, rotating the cleaning of toys and the good promotion of personal hygiene. This contributes to effectively minimising the risk of infection to children. Through practical routines, the children understand they are protecting themselves from germs and illness when they wash their hands and wipe their noses. In addition, through the children's centre links with health services children are benefiting from the introduction of an oral hygiene programme.

The good management of illness helps to minimise cross-infection and cross-contamination to promote children's health. The group policy clearly outlines that ill children should remain at home to protect the health of others. This information also includes details on infectious diseases and incubation periods so that parents are well informed. There are effective procedures in place regarding the administration of medicines to children. For example, staff record detailed information regarding medication and management witness any administration to protect children.

The children have excellent opportunities to be active and exercise indoors and outdoors, which supports them in leading a healthy lifestyle. For example, the younger children have the space and freedom to crawl and roll. The outdoor area provides opportunities to support all areas of children's learning. The children make exceptional use of the outdoor area and thoroughly enjoy their time playing outdoors. For example, they sit on the small benches and listen to stories, climb into the sandpit and enjoy the feeling of sand on their bare feet and crawl in and out of the camouflage den. There is an excellent range of equipment that promotes and supports children's development, such as bikes, climbing frames, planting areas, mark making, balance beams, hoops and balls. Physical activity is an integral part of the curriculum programme for all children. All children enjoy walks in the local community to extend their experiences, such as visits to the local park.

The group fully understand the importance of promoting healthy eating to support children's healthy growth and development. The menus are a balance of good nutritious meals and snacks, such as home-cooked fish dishes, chicken, pasta, vegetables and fresh fruit. The meals are varied and incorporate foods from around the world and children's individual dietary needs. To demonstrate their commitment to promoting healthy choices the nursery has received a healthy eating award from the local authority. Through activities, the children are developing a good awareness of healthy foods, for example, they have grown lettuces in their garden. The mealtimes are a relaxing, calm and social experience for children. They sit in small groups and interact with their peers. The children are developing good independence skills, for example,

babies and younger children acquire new skills as they feed themselves and older children help prepare snack and serve their own food.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The environment for children is safe and secure with good safety precautions in place to support this. Detailed risk assessments minimise the risk of accidents, the staff vigilantly supervise the children and entrance systems ensure staff can monitor who enters the premises. During staff and management meetings, safety issues are monitored to ensure they are effective in keeping children safe. The children are developing a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. For example, they talk about road safety when on outings and take part in regular fire evacuations.

The children access a broad range of stimulating resources that are safe and maintained in good condition. The space within the nursery is organised and utilised well to promote the welfare of the children. They are cared for in rooms appropriate to their ages with a good range of equipment available to meet their needs, such as comfortable sleep areas. Through the good organisation of the environment and resources, the children make independent and safe choices, making excellent use of all areas.

The staff have a good knowledge of child protection issues to protect children from harm. In addition, through comprehensive training senior staff have extended their knowledge and understanding to ensure they are fully aware of their responsibilities. Staff follow the clear procedures in place if they have concerns about a child, for example, they know how to report and monitor concerns. The group is aware of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures and their policy reflects this. There are good procedures in place to ensure staff are suitable to care for children, such as recruitment and vetting procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The staff are extremely friendly and this provides a welcoming and very relaxing atmosphere for children. This results in children being very happy and settled; they are eager to attend and thoroughly enjoy their time at the nursery. There is a wide range of children's work, posters and photographs displayed to contribute to the welcoming feel and promote a sense of belonging for children. The staff work hard to settle new children. This includes induction days so that they can find out what children like. This helps staff plan and provide activities they know children are familiar with.

The children have excellent relationships with each other and staff. The staff know the children really well, they are highly involved in their play and use this time to effectively support and challenge children's individual development. The children respond positively to this and results in them being enthusiastic and confident to make choices about their play. This includes the children having the confidence to initiate activities. For example, children finding worms approach staff who provide additional resources, such as magnifying glasses and viewfinders to develop this spontaneous activity. The children play extremely well together and they show great concern for their peers. For example, they cooperate, share and take turns in play and offer comfort when their friends hurt themselves.

The staff have a secure and thorough understanding of child development and how young children learn. This supports them in planning a challenging and stimulating range of exceptional play opportunities that match children's interests and needs. For example, children resourcefully and independently use the outdoor sinks to fill their watering cans to water the plants and shrubs in the garden. The children of all ages are extremely busy throughout the session and they thoroughly enjoy their time at the group. For instance, the children laugh with pleasure as they take off their shoes and socks and explore the sandpit. To help them plan, the staff make excellent use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and 'Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage' when planning children's play. Through observations and monitoring of children's development staff successfully integrate children's individual learning into the opportunities provided. Staff constantly review these records to monitor their effectiveness both for the younger and older children.

Nursery Education:

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. The staff have an excellent understanding of the Foundation Stage and teaching is rooted around this. They effectively use the guidance to plan an enriching and inspiring curriculum for children. There is an extensive range of continuous provision, supported by enhanced and focus activities to challenge and motivate children. There is a children's centre teacher who works within the setting on a regular basis to provide staff with continual support. By working cohesively together, they are proactive in evaluating the education programme and continually strive to make any necessary changes to enhance opportunities for children.

The staff are highly involved in children's play and use this time resourcefully to ask children a broad range of questions to encourage children to use their initiative and develop their own ideas and thinking. Many of these are spontaneous as staff build on children's curiosity. For example, during a story staff use their professional skills to help children work out how they know the fish had found his mother. As a result of the effective teaching and stimulating curriculum the children make outstanding progress in their learning given their capabilities and starting points. The children are fully involved and engrossed in an exciting range of indoor and outdoor activities. They are highly motivated learners and approach challenges with enthusiasm. Along with the positive and strong relationships with others, their personal, social and emotional development is very good.

Children's mathematical, communication, language and literacy skills are excellent. The children are extremely confident speakers and they engage easily in conversation with others. This includes dual language support for children with English as an additional language. This ensures children develop their skills and confidence to communicate in English. The children participate in a broad range of activities that support their early writing skills. This includes drawing, painting and making marks. For example, three-year-olds draw recognisable pictures, form letters and some attempt to write their name. Their early reading skills are developing well as they look at books, concentrate, and listen attentively to stories. The children take part in a wide and challenging range of practical and fun activities to support their mathematical development. The children are using a good range of mathematical language during play. For example, children talk about the tall sunflowers and big sharks. The children count confidently and play games that involve number to help them learn about simple number concepts.

Children are highly curious and inquisitive learners. They eagerly ask questions, explore their environment and take an interest in what they see. For example, children excitedly talk about what they have found when digging in the garden. This encourages children to describe their

findings using all their senses, such as talking about the smell of the lavender plants and the small wiggly worm tickling their hand. Through planning activities, the children learn about caring for living things. They do this well as they take responsibility for watering the plants. These activities support children's development in a knowledge and understanding of the world.

Children use their imaginations extremely well to express themselves and to share their ideas and thoughts. For example, children dress up and engage in role play activities, such as hunting for sharks and crawling in and out of the outdoor camouflage den. The children explore an extensive range of media, texture, musical instruments and art activities to develop their creativity. For example, children create bubble paintings, explore the texture of paint on their hands and discover the properties of dough and sand with enthusiasm.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The children's behaviour is good and the staff reinforce this through positive praise. Consistent routines, clear guidelines and explanations why certain behaviour is unacceptable help the children to learn about right and wrong. The children play well together, they learn about sharing and taking turns and use their manners well. For example, young children politely ask adults if they can get past when riding on bikes outdoors. In addition, the group has a written policy that supports the good behaviour management strategies in place.

The children have a sense of belonging within the group; for example, their work is valued and displayed around the setting. Staff listen to children well and respect their views and ideas. This includes children contributing to the activities provided. The children have excellent opportunities to be independent as they freely choose what they want to play with. This promotes children's positive self-esteem. Children are aware of their local community and become an active part of this through the services integrated within the children's centre. For example, through links with community services children benefit from activities, such as 'Babies into books' and oral hygiene programmes. There is a good range of resources that provide positive images of others in the community and wider world so that children learn and understand about diversity. For example, books, posters, dolls, dressing-up outfits and activities that involve children celebrating religious and cultural festivals. This promotes children's positive self-image and their respect for others. This means children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The staff operate an effective key person system to ensure a familiar adult cares for children. This ensures the staff have a good knowledge of children's needs and ensures they effectively meet them in line with their own routines. This provides continuity for children. There are good systems to support children with disabilities, learning difficulties or for children who speak English as an additional language. This includes providing bilingual support, individual plans, liaison with parents, other professional and external agencies and services.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. There are strong and positive relationships between staff and parents and they work successfully together. They share and exchange information to promote children's welfare, such as their likes, dislikes, routines and day to day care. The parents are encouraged to play an active role in the setting and their child's learning. They look at their child's progress records and attend parents' evenings to discuss their child's development. Information on themes encourages parents to continue their child's learning at home. Although, information staff gain from parents regarding their child's development as they start the setting to help them build on children's skills is more limited. Comments from

parents were extremely positive, especially about their relationships with staff, activities for children and support available to them. In addition, notice boards, policies, procedures, activity planning, newsletters and welcome packs outline the service provided for children. Established parents' forums contribute to the information shared and services provided within the children's centre. For example, through 'job link' the children's centre help find childcare to enable parents to access work.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The staff work successfully together, they are organised and make good use of their time to effectively promote children's well-being. For example, they deploy themselves well to ensure they meet adult to child ratios and to supervise children. The staff know the children really well and use this to organise the day. This provides continuity and security for children.

There is comprehensive documentation available that contributes to the safe management of the setting. This meets regulation requirements. Documents clearly outline the service provided for children and families within the children's centre. In welcome packs, parents get some information on the setting. However, the main policies and procedures are stored in the office and organised across a number of files containing comprehensive information, some relevant to staff and some parents. Parents know they can ask to see these, but their ready and independent access is a little restricting. Information recorded on the children is concise and up to date; this means they are cared for effectively and ensures staff promote their well-being and welfare.

The centre manager and directors have already established some effective links with local health services to deliver and bring together a range of children's and community health services, such as oral hygiene. Through local action groups the centre help identify the needs of local families and the community so that they can establish services to meet these needs. Some links are still evolving to strengthen the additional services in the children's centre.

The leadership and management of the group is good. Directors, management and staff are open to ideas and suggestions and they consistently strive to explore ways to enhance the service they offer. They have established good monitoring and evaluation systems to help them review their service, such as quality assurance documents, room reviews, staff meetings and access to a good range of training. They demonstrate their commitment to improve through their hard work in achieving a number of quality awards, such as 'Quality counts', healthy eating and Investors in People. Positive comments from parents also reflect how the continual improvements influence their children's care. Parents feel confident to approach staff to suggest ideas and feel staff would take any comments on board positively.

Staff development is priority; there are clear training programmes in place for all staff. Appraisals contribute to staff evaluating their own practice and how this influences children. Staff understand the benefits of training and use it to assist them in reviewing what they offer children and how they can enhance this. There is a large number of qualified staff at the setting. Numerous staff are studying for further qualifications, including foundation degrees, which shows their commitment to providing positive outcomes for children. Detailed induction programmes ensure staff know what is expected of them and this ensures children receive good quality care. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the provider agreed to develop a system for logging nappy changes and risk assessments. There are now clear systems in place for recording when children have their nappies changed, which includes key adults taking responsibility for this. This develops secure bonds with children and contributes to continuity of care. Detailed risk assessments are in all rooms so that children are kept safe and staff are vigilant in implementing these.

In regard to the nursery education, the provider agreed to establish ways to monitor the education programme and planning for children's individual needs. There are clear and effective monitoring systems in place, which ensure staff are proactive in evaluating children's learning. This included providing more opportunities for children to access resources to promote their mathematical thinking. For example, they sort, match and count; this helps children to learn about solving problems. Children's individual records show children's progress and their next steps. Staff effectively use these and their knowledge of the children to plan activities to challenge their learning. The systems devised for monitoring the education programme is continual to ensure the setting strive for good outcomes and quality.

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):

- consider the accessibility of information relevant to parents regarding policies and procedures of the setting.

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):

- enhance systems for parents to contribute to their child's learning, including sharing what their children already know to enable staff to build on children's individual development (also applies to care).

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