

# Playhouse Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	205295
<b>Inspection date</b>	18 February 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Valerie Fane
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<b>Registered person</b>	Lorraine Walker
<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?

Playhouse Nursery is a privately owned nursery that was registered in 1986. It operates from a large Victorian semi-detached house near the centre of Great Malvern. Children use the first four floors of the property and have access to a specifically adapted fully-enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery serves Malvern and the surrounding area.

The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 18:00 for 51 weeks of the year. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 68 children on roll. Of these 20 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children for whom English is an additional language.

There are 12 staff who work with the children. Of these nine have appropriate qualifications to Level 2 or above and others are working towards relevant qualifications. Some members of staff are also working towards higher level qualifications. The nursery receives support from a mentor teacher from the local authority.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children have excellent opportunities to develop healthy eating habits. The food provided by the nursery is from organic suppliers wherever possible and is healthy and nutritious. Children enjoy an interesting varied choice of fresh fruit for their mid-morning snack such as a selection of orange, banana or peach. Main meals include options such as home-made meat and potato pie made with vegetarian mince and served with carrot and swede. The menus are reviewed regularly and the cook explores different ways of serving foods to encourage children to eat new things. Older children begin to exercise control over their eating because they have the option of second helpings and staff keep a record of how much all children have eaten to share with their parents. Younger children become independent eaters because they are encouraged to use a spoon to feed themselves as soon as they show an interest in being involved. Children's dietary needs are met very well because the manager obtains information at the point of admission and ensures that it is clearly displayed in the nursery rooms and in the kitchen. The cook provides separate meals and labels them clearly for staff to serve. Children are safeguarded because staff have undertaken appropriate food hygiene training and maintain extremely high standards that have been recognised by the local environmental health department with a very high star rating. Older children have excellent opportunities to extend their understanding of healthy eating through well-planned, interesting activities. For example, they walk to the shop and buy ingredients to make vegetable soup. They talk about where the ingredients come from and which ones are good for you, cut them up, make the soup and home-made bread and enjoy eating it.

Children enjoy a very wide range of opportunities for fresh air and exercise. They make excellent use of the two outside play areas for different activities. They go on regular walks to the local park and sometimes on the Malvern Hills. Once a week the older children walk to the local swimming pool and enjoy a swimming lesson where they gain confidence in the water and begin to learn how to swim. Children are able to maximise opportunities for fresh air because they can access the outdoor areas in almost any weather conditions as the nursery provides all-weather clothing for both the toddlers and the pre-school. Children develop excellent climbing skills on the nursery climbing frames and older children have further opportunities for challenge when they visit the local park. Children of all ages use an excellent range of small equipment to develop a wide range of physical skills. Babies make very good progress in their physical development because staff know each child extremely well and know how to provide excellent support to encourage them to make progress such as to learn to crawl or to stand.

Children develop an excellent understanding of good hygiene because they learn to wash their hands after using the toilet, before eating and after messy play and after lunch they learn to clean their teeth. They receive very good care in the event of an accident or needing medication because all staff have current first aid knowledge. Staff keep accurate records of any accident that occurs or medication given and ensure that these are signed by parents. The manager analyses the accident records to assess what has happened and whether any steps need to be taken to reduce the risk of accidents happening. Children are protected from cross-infection because the nursery has a clear policy not to accept children who are unwell and this is made known to parents before their child attends. The infection control guidelines for the nursery meet or exceed the government guidelines. Babies' health needs are met well because all staff are aware of their needs and routines through care plans displayed in their base room.

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

The provision is good.

Children use premises that are suitable and are kept clean and well-maintained. The layout of the equipment is attractive and welcoming. Children see their own work displayed as well as information to support their learning and photographs of recent activities. They use a wide range of equipment that is suitable and safe including a very good selection of outdoor play equipment. This is because the staff provide child-sized furniture, equipment and toys that are appropriate for their purpose, are of suitable design and condition and are very well-maintained because cleaning rotas are in use in each room.

Children's safety is potentially compromised because the system for managing access to the premises is not always adhered to. Parents are not all aware that they must not allow unfamiliar adults unsupervised access to the premises. In all other respects children receive good care in a safe and secure environment and they are well-supervised at all times. The owner makes good use of risk assessments to monitor the safety of the premises and ensures that these are reviewed regularly. Some written risk assessments are completed for outings and a verbal risk assessment is discussed with the relevant staff before any group leaves the premises for a walk. Children learn to protect themselves in an emergency because they have regular opportunities to practise the evacuation procedures and the health and safety officer keeps a record of the practices. Good procedures are in place with regard to the collection of children. Parents are asked to introduce anyone new who will be collecting their child or at least produce a photograph. Children learn about road safety because they wear reflective jackets and learn to hold hands, to walk in pairs and how to cross roads safely.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff have a good understanding of the symptoms of child abuse and the procedures to follow if they were to have concerns about a child in their care. Children develop their awareness of their personal safety because they learn about the risks posed by strangers, they begin to understand that secrets are not always good things and they gain confidence to speak for themselves if they do not like another child's behaviour towards them.

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

The provision is good.

Children of all ages thoroughly enjoy themselves in the warm and homely atmosphere of this nursery. They settle easily and form good relationships with staff and older children develop friendships with each other. Children under three years of age are divided into three groups according to their age. Children in each of these groups experience a wide range of sensory experiences that provides them with excellent opportunities to explore different media. The youngest babies play with jelly, pasta or cornflour and water. Staff have an excellent understanding of each baby's developmental needs and are aware of which children are unsure about different textures. The older babies enjoy playing with shredded paper and cardboard boxes. They hide toys in the paper and enjoy looking for them. They develop early mathematical awareness as they find that some boxes do not fit inside each other and they develop creativity as they use the boxes to build a rocket. They improve their social skills as they share the equipment with other children. The two-year-olds develop their creativity as they experiment freely with gold and silver paint and use tools such as paint brushes with increasing competence. Children in each room enjoy looking at age-appropriate books with adults. The older babies enjoy listening to favourite stories such as 'Dear Zoo' and enthusiastically make the noises for

each animal while the two-year-olds develop their awareness of rhyming sounds as they listen to stories such as 'The Gruffalo'.

All of the younger children benefit from a programme of carefully planned activities that supports the ethos of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Children of different abilities within each room make good progress because staff differentiate activities appropriately. Staff observe all children regularly and use the observations to identify children's particular needs or areas for development and incorporate these into their plans for future activities.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children benefit from an interesting programme of planned activities and good opportunities for free play. The planned activities cover all aspects of the six areas of learning and have clearly defined learning intentions that relate to relevant and appropriate stepping stones for children of this age. Staff have an excellent knowledge of the Foundation Stage and a clear understanding of how children learn that enables them to provide suitable differentiation for individual children. They observe and evaluate each child's progress and use the evaluations to inform future planning. This enables all children to make good progress towards the early learning goals. However, children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do not benefit from an individual education plan with clearly defined short term targets to provide additional support for their learning. Children behave well and become engrossed in their activities. They are enthusiastic learners because staff make excellent use of their time and are fully involved in their play and learning. Staff make good use of questioning to develop children's thinking and understanding but they also know when to stand back and allow children to develop their own ideas.

Children thoroughly enjoy a clay activity with a visiting potter. They learn to take responsibility for their own learning because while he is setting up they close their eyes and think about what they will make with the clay. They watch with awe and wonder as he shows them how to make a pot on the wheel. They show understanding of different materials as they talk about what happens when he adds water to the clay. They use mathematical language such as 'taller' and 'fatter' to describe how the pot is changing shape as they make it. They have their own lump of clay and explore its texture, using interesting descriptive language to talk about it. They spend a long time making their own models with the clay and take turns to make an egg cup on the wheel with the potter ready for Easter.

Children become confident communicators. They share their news with the rest of the group at circle time and learn to listen to each other. They talk freely to staff at snack time and initiate interesting conversations about topics that interest them such as knights and unicorns. Staff ensure that all children have opportunities to take part in the conversations. Children develop good self-help skills. They pour their own drinks at snack time and they learn to dress and undress themselves when they go swimming each week.

Children have a superb time developing imaginative play outside. They work together with a high level of co-operation to build a pirate ship using wooden blocks and planks. They enjoy climbing on to it and jumping off and then use good problem-solving skills to try to find other ways of climbing up. They try using the bikes but find that they slip. Staff know when to offer help and discuss alternatives with the children. The children decide to fetch some more planks from the shed. They construct a long ramp of planks to reach the pirate ship from the edge of the play area and improve their balancing skills as they try to walk along it. They extend their imaginative play further and decide it is time to go to sleep so they modify the design of the

ship to create a flat surface to lie on. They show sustained concentration and involvement in their play.

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

The provision is good.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children develop a good awareness of our wider society because they play with a range of ethnic toys such as dolls books and role play equipment to support their learning. They learn about other cultures and religions as they celebrate a variety of different festivals such as Chinese New Year. They make a large dragon by decorating cardboard boxes. They enjoy a Chinese restaurant in the role play area and use rice and noodles to cook pretend meals in their wok. They look at a map to find out where China is and they discover which animal year they belong to. Children become aware of those who are less fortunate than themselves because they take part in fund raising activities for 'Children in need' such as a sponsored walk, and staff help them to understand why they are doing the walk.

Children behave extremely well throughout the nursery because staff set clear and appropriate boundaries for their behaviour and are good role models. They are polite and helpful and older children learn to be considerate of one another as they play. Staff encourage good behaviour by rewarding children with a choice of activities or a star for doing something helpful such as sweeping up the sand. Children's challenging behaviour is managed effectively but children are generally fully involved in their play and such behaviour is rare. When it does occur staff look for underlying causes and try to address these. If problems persist they discuss strategies with parents.

The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, the policy is not up to date and in line with government legislation and such children do not benefit from an individual education plan with clearly defined targets for their development. In other respects these children are supported well. Staff liaise closely with their parents and where relevant with outside agencies and follow any advice provided. If they have concerns about a child in their care they discuss these with parents and encourage them to seek professional advice. The nursery has a clear policy with regard to the Disability Discrimination Act because staff are aware of the difficult access to the premises and robust procedures are in place to enable all children and their parents to use the nursery.

Children are secure in the nursery because their parents are well-informed about the provision. The brochure includes useful information about children's care and learning and children have several opportunities for trial visits before they start. Children's ongoing continuity of care is supported well because staff keep a diary for each child that contains observations made by staff as well as any information supplied by parents and provides a good record of children's development.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. Parents are aware of what children are learning because the planning is displayed outside the pre-school room. They attend regular parents' evenings and know that they can ask to see children's records at any time. Children also have a 'journey diary' of their time in nursery. This contains photographs and examples of their work that staff have annotated to explain what children are learning through different activities. Children's links with home are further supported because parents are encouraged to contribute pictures of special occasions at home to include in the diary.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children flourish in the well-organised nursery environment and benefit greatly from the experience and expertise of the excellent team of staff who work with them. Most staff have at least a Level 2 early years qualification and new staff are encouraged to work towards one. Some staff are working towards relevant higher level qualifications to extend their knowledge. All staff attend regular training and have two appraisals each year to review their work with the owner.

Children are protected from harm because the recruitment procedures are thorough. This ensures that all staff have undergone Criminal Records Bureau checks and are suitable to be in contact with children. New staff receive comprehensive induction to ensure that they are familiar with the nursery's policies and procedures. Children's welfare is safeguarded because the operational plan and the range of policies and procedures work very well in practice and are fully understood by all members of staff. Parents provide all necessary information and consents before their child attends the group and records are kept of the hours of attendance of children, staff and visitors.

Leadership and management of the funded children is good. Children thrive because the owner is committed to providing high quality care and education for the children in her care. She has a clear vision to help children learn and grow and to expand their knowledge and horizons through natural interaction and guidance from their room leader. She shares this with her dedicated team of staff who work very well together. Children benefit because the owner facilitates regular training for staff to gain higher level qualifications or to attend short courses to update and improve their good practice. She involves all staff in regular self-evaluations of the good practice in the nursery and is proactive in looking for innovative ways to overcome the limitations of the premises to improve the quality of the provision.

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

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection of the care the nursery was recommended to review and expand the procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation against a member of staff or a volunteer and to update the complaints procedure. At the last inspection of the nursery education the points for consideration were to extend the ways in which parents can be encouraged to follow up activities or learning experiences with their children and to improve the information about the procedures to support children for whom English is an additional language.

Children are safeguarded in the event of an allegation of abuse against a member of staff or a volunteer because the procedure is now clearly stated in the child protection policy and included in the staff handbook. The complaints policy has been updated and is readily available to parents.

Children are able to continue their learning at home because parents have regular opportunities to attend open days to see their children's work and children take books home to share with their parents. Children for whom English is an additional language receive good support because there is a clear policy in place that enables nursery staff to access outside help where appropriate and children's needs are discussed with parents prior to admission.

## **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):

- improve the system for managing access to the premises and ensure that all parents are aware of the need for security
- update the written statement about special needs to ensure it is consistent with the Code of Practice (2001) for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs and implement the code in relation to individual education plans (also applies to nursery education).

#### **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 improvements as indicated in the care section above.

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)