

# The Purple Playhouse

Inspection report for early years provision

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| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 200785                |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 05 December 2007      |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Sheila Dawn Flounders |

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|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Setting Address</b>    | Sydenham Primary School,, Calder Walk, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV31 1SA |
| <b>Telephone number</b>   | 01926 832693  |
| <b>E-mail</b>             |   |
| <b>Registered person</b>  | The Purple Playhouse  |
| <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?

The Purple Playhouse is a committee run group which opened in 1992 and recently extended to full day care. It operates from an area within Sydenham Primary School, which is situated on an estate to the south of Leamington Spa, Warwickshire. It includes the main play room, lobby, toilets, kitchen and office. A maximum of 30 children may attend the setting at any one time. It 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, which is partially covered.

There are currently 31 children aged from two years to under five years on roll. Of these, 19 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local estate and surrounding areas. The setting currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The group employs four members of staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications. They receive support from the local authority, and liaise closely with the reception class of the school.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children have excellent opportunities for physical play with access to the covered outdoor area daily and as a result are developing an awareness of how their bodies work and the importance of physical exercise and fresh air. They are able to use equipment which develops their large muscles in the fresh air and also resources in the outdoor learning area. The school hall is available, for example, where they develop their skills with hoops and balls. Children also take part in music and movement activities during the session, for example, marching around the room to the 'Grand old Duke of York' or thinking about how the music makes them want to move. A soft play area has been developed specifically for the younger children, which is accessible to them all at times and a recent outing provided further opportunities for physical play.

Children have their dietary needs met because staff obtain details about these on the enrolment forms and relevant information is used when providing snacks and meals. They are well-hydrated because fresh drinking water is accessible at all times and drinks are regularly offered, with the rolling snack provision helping them to become independent. Children receive meals and snacks that have been suitably stored, prepared and served because staff have undertaken food hygiene training and implement good practice. They are well-nourished because freshly prepared healthy snacks are provided during the session, with hot school lunches for those who attend longer sessions. Breakfast and tea are also available. Children extend their knowledge of healthy eating, nutrition, and a healthy lifestyle during discussions about food, experiences in role play scenarios and through topics in connection with their bodies.

Children understand simple good health and hygiene practices and are encouraged to wash their hands frequently, with the sink in the main room used independently after messy play and before eating, as well as easy access to the toilet area, where staff supervise them to ensure thorough hand washing takes place.

Children stay healthy because they are cared for in premises that are extremely clean. They are protected from cross infection through a combination of the thorough cleaning routines, robust nappy changing procedure, the clear sickness policy and the admission form which make it clear children cannot attend when they are ill. Children receive suitable care in the event of an accident or illness because all staff have current first aid qualifications, a suitable first aid box is maintained, detailed accident and medication records are kept and signed by parents. Confidentiality is maintained when completing these records. Young children receive good care including sensitive nappy changing and sleeping arrangements, they are able to rest or sleep according to their need in their own 'cosy corner'.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe environment which has recently been refurbished to high standards. Safety issues have been considered as an integral part of this so that all necessary measures are in place at all times, for example, the door to the kitchen is away from the play areas and all the glass is safety glass. The external door is controlled from inside with parents having to ring a bell to gain entry, with supervised arrival and collection procedures, including signing children and visitors in. The doors through to school are coded

so that children cannot go through them unsupervised. Children use only suitable and safe equipment within a bright and well-decorated premises. They are able to access an extensive range of high-quality, well-maintained resources which are suitable to their ages and stage of development. Careful consideration has been given to the differing needs of the younger children and some resources obtained specifically for them, although accessible to all. Staff ensure that the environment remains safe through daily checks, thorough risk assessments of the premises and activities and constant supervision and vigilance. For example, staff awareness is raised at induction, issues are discussed with new parents and children are reminded during play to be careful as they move around with toys.

Children are kept safe on outings because of the policy and procedures followed. Each outing is assessed for potential risk, consent from parents obtained, ratios halved and children always closely supervised. Staff also check the medical information in case of conflict with any known allergies. Children learn to protect themselves as they are made aware of the boundaries of the setting. The older children are sensitive about the safety issues for the younger children, for example, they report to staff if too many children play in a specific area, or sometimes ask staff to keep an eye on what they are playing with together. They also have regular opportunities to practise the emergency drill along with the school and independently, with some staff trained to act as fire marshals. Children are safeguarded because staff understand their role in child protection. They have a sound knowledge of the symptoms of child abuse and they know what action to take if they have concerns about a child. The committee are aware of the correct procedures to follow if an allegation is made against a member of staff or a volunteer, parents are also informed of what they should do if they are concerned about anything they see.

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

The provision is good.

All of the children develop confidence, self-esteem and become competent learners as they are given many opportunities to explore the environment around them and make their own decisions about what they want to do, which are then supported by the staff if necessary. They use their initiative about how to develop many of the activities, for example, painting is always available outside and other creative activities such as dough, dressing up and role play inside promote free use of their imaginations. They are all able to access the main activities each session, with staff at times taking the older children into different areas to do more focussed learning in their key worker groups, or the younger children into the 'cosy corner' if their attention starts to wander. The younger children particularly benefit from the consistent care of a key worker which helps them to form positive relationships when they are new to the setting. All of the children are always given time to become engrossed in what they are doing, with very few set routines in place. Emphasis is put on communication skills and staff spend much of their time in conversation with the children, discussing what they are doing or asking questions to provoke thought and further learning. Children acquire new knowledge and skills constantly. Young children's progress and development is well supported because staff plan appropriate activities linked to the 'Birth to three matters' framework and observe and record what they achieve regularly.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff are mostly qualified and all very experienced, with a sound knowledge of how to provide a broad curriculum for the children which covers all areas of learning. They are all involved in the weekly planning and are mainly confident about what they expect the children to learn from the activities provided. Plans contain all necessary

elements to provide purposeful activities indoors and outside while allowing flexibility to respond to unexpected opportunities that arise during the interaction with children. However, whilst some staff are skilled at adapting the activities according to the differing abilities of the children taking part at any time, details of how to do this is not part of the plans, nor available to other adults who assist at times. Staff routinely discuss and evaluate the previous weeks activities but do not record this, although some information is recorded during observations of individual children it is not sufficiently linked back to the planning to determine if the learning intentions are achieved. That individual children are making good progress is well documented, with staff providing appropriate challenge through targeted activities and also constant access to a discovery table to encouraged children to find out about objects for themselves.

Children benefit from an interesting range of planned activities which allow them to cover all aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum, with physical and creative development being particularly strong. The older children are all confident, articulate, keen to learn and happy to be at nursery. Their self-esteem is well promoted through circle time activities, when they are able to respond to musical prompts and use signing to reply to their names, have opportunities to discuss the date and weather and find out what activities are available today. They are also individually able to share their news and ideas with the group through the medium of the 'magic carpet' which the children know means they must listen to what the person on the carpet has to say. In key work group activities children often concentrate on aspects of the theme, which is currently nursery rhymes, to bring in other areas of the curriculum and at the end of circle time practise several of the rhymes then have been learning. Then later, for example, in one area children find numbered sheep in the sand and put them in order, reinforcing their awareness of numbers from zero to seven; then elsewhere children use various tools and materials to make a picture of sheep.

Children have many opportunities to develop their independence such as self-registration, trying to put their own coats on to go outside and managing their own snack time. Through practice they gain confidence in handling the resources and equipment and co-operate well together when necessary. They are surrounded by visual stimuli, labelling and opportunities to practise their emergent writing skills. Staff make time during session to concentrate on the English skills of those children for whom it is an additional language, as well as a short period concentrating on phonics for the older children. Numbers are also all around the children, either as numerals, or for measurement, with many games and activities used to reinforce their understanding of ordering, sorting, pattern and problem solving. Children are confident users of technology, have opportunities to explore the world around them and watch changes as living things grow. They use their imaginations constantly, such as to decorate their Christmas cards or to make meals in the home corner. Responses collected around questions about the mouse in 'Hickory dickory' such as where he went next, who he lives with and what his favourite toy, food and colour might be are recorded for parents in their individual 'mouse' books.

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

The provision is good.

Children have their individual needs met well, including those children with additional needs resulting from disability, learning difficulties or having English as an additional language, as there are effective procedures in place to identify what these are and support all children's needs. When necessary staff liaise appropriately with other professionals and incorporate suggested activities into the child's sessions. At times some of the resources are used with all of the children to promote inclusion, for example, the pictorial prompts are always in place and all of the children are enjoying learning to sign with 'Mr. Tumble'. The children generally get

on very well together, engage in co-operative play activities often and are able to take turns or share resources. They begin to distinguish between right and wrong due to the consistent approach of staff, so that they know what the boundaries are with new children soon learning. On the whole children behave very well, with staff positively managing the few incidents that do occur, with appropriate strategies which do not damage children's self-esteem, always including a discussion about what happened so that children learn to understand what reasonable behaviour is.

All of the children have opportunities each session to make choices and decisions for themselves, which they see the staff and other children respect. They are mostly aware of their own needs and encouraged to care for them. The older children particularly are aware and sensitive to the fact that the needs of the younger children may differ from their own. They are all able to develop a sense of belonging in the nursery because they are made to feel welcome from their first visit and they have somewhere to put their own belongings. They see the developing relationship between the staff and their parents or carers and they take pride in having their creative work on display all around the nursery. Children become aware of wider society as they access a range of equipment and resources which provide positive images of diversity. They learn about different cultures and religions through planned activities, for example, recently about Diwali and currently about Christmas. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

All parents are provided with detailed information about the nursery, including how to access policies and procedures, with specific areas of the notice board for communications with them. They are able to visit before their child attends and discuss any issues with the key worker. Once children start daily exchanges keep them informed about what the children have been doing, although how this is done varies according to when the children attend, which could impact on the consistency of information. The recent extension and longer hours enables the nursery to offer a more flexible service to meet the needs of the parents. The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of early education is good. They receive additional information about the Foundation Stage curriculum through the prospectus, detailed visual and written displays and access to the planning documentation. Staff always inform them of their child's significant achievements and they are aware of the plans for more formal opportunities to exchange information about their progress. They have some opportunities to add comments on what the children do at home to their records and feel very involved in their learning through verbal or written suggestions from staff of how to extend their child's learning at home. They also have opportunities to take home books to share, take 'Polo' or 'Ted' home and report back on their experiences, spend time in the setting or help out on the committee.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children receive good care because a key worker system is used effectively, adult:child ratios are met and staff are suitably deployed at all times, working flexibly to remain alert to the changing needs particularly of the younger children. Careful consideration has been given to the differing needs of the children who attend for longer sessions, to ensure that they do not repeat the same activities. Staff make very good use of the time they spend interacting with the children, the space available to them in the premises and the wide range of resources. All necessary information, permissions and documentation is obtained from parents and carers before children attend to enable staff to care for them appropriately. There are a wide range of policies and procedures in place in the operational plan which work together to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment and achievements and their positive contribution within

the setting. Children's welfare is safeguarded because all staff have undergone suitability checks, an induction process is in place for new staff and students, with the committee well aware of their roles and responsibilities. Most staff are qualified, with effective arrangement in place in respect of planned and unplanned absences. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management of early education is good. There is very strong internal leadership, with the manager inspirational to others within the setting. The staff and committee work well together as team and the results of their hard work can clearly be seen. The committee are supportive and knowledgeable, they maintain regular contact with the staff. Between the manager, staff and committee there is a high level of awareness of their strengths and most weaknesses, most of which they are already addressing. Many of the committee spend time in the setting, with some actively involved in the staff appraisals and identifying training needs and are thus able to keep a sufficient overview to monitor and evaluate the provision of early education.

The nursery demonstrate a strong commitment to improve, being willing to rectify many issues immediately and a willingness to work with other professionals, particularly in the local area.

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

At the last inspection the provider was asked to improve some aspects of the health and safety provision. There is now always at least one member of staff with a current first aid certificate on the premises or on outings at any one time, hand washing practices have been improved by the addition of a sink in the main playroom and all staff have regular updates on health and safety requirements. The provider was also asked to improve the assessment process and provide more opportunities for children to access large physical play, music and writing for other purposes. There are now many opportunities during the session to access physical activities including those that develop large muscles, music is a regular feature in various formats and mark-making and other writing opportunities are provided daily in dedicated areas and through role play scenarios. The assessment process now includes some information from parents to establish the child's starting point, and each child has a detailed profile which contains a mixture of text and photographic evidence to demonstrate their progress.

### **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):

- develop the information provided for parents on children activities during the session, to ensure consistency between those whose children attend for differing periods.

### **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):

- develop the evaluation of planned activities, considering whether learning intentions are achieved, to provide a sound basis to move individual children forward
- extend the planning to provide more detail of how activities are adapted for children of differing ability.

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)