

Play & Learn Nurseries Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY274846
Inspection date	14 December 2007
Inspector	Josephine Mary Hammick

Setting Address	St. Martins School, Ross Road, South Wye, Hereford, Herefordshire, HR2 7RJ
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Registered person	Play & Learn Nurseries Ltd
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Play & Learn Nurseries Ltd opened in 2004 and operates from a self-contained unit located on St. Martin's school site. A maximum of 49 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 all year. Children have access to a secure enclosed outside play area.

There are currently 56 children aged under five years on roll. Of these, 14 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery serves the local area. The nursery currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 15 staff. 13 of the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. Training is ongoing. The setting receives support from the local authority. The setting has achieved a bronze quality assurance award.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children throughout the setting benefit from established procedures in place that promote their personal hygiene as practitioners ensure they follow regular hand washing routines after outside play, toileting and before snacks and meals. Aprons and disposable gloves are worn by staff at appropriate times, such as for nappy changing and serving meals. All areas and equipment are kept clean. Practitioners are extra vigilant about the cleanliness of toys and equipment used in the baby room, wiping them over with antibacterial solution after use. Children within the pre-school area are becoming independent in their self-care skills as, for example, they are actively encouraged to try to put on their own coats for outside play, or visit the toileting area independently with staff giving appropriate support when required. However, there are missed opportunities for children to develop in other areas of independence, such as being encouraged to prepare and serve their own food and drink.

Children enjoy a wide selection of nutritious and wholesome snacks and meals which helps them form healthy eating habits from an early age. All children have regular drinks and children in the pre-school can independently access fresh water throughout the day, which prevents tiredness and dehydration. Staff have a thorough knowledge of the children's individual dietary needs and effective procedures are in place to ensure they are met, with information displayed and through ongoing discussion with parents. However, the procedures that are followed to warm through children's meals brought in from home delay the lunchtime routine. Consequently, children are having to wait for long periods before their meal is at the correct temperature to eat safely. Babies are held whilst being bottle fed which helps them feel secure and to develop warm and trusting relationships with their carers. In other areas of the setting, staff sit with the children at mealtimes which has a positive impact on the occasion and on children's emerging social skills. Most staff at the setting have a valid first aid qualification and therefore are able to deal with accidents and ill-health effectively and efficiently.

Children enjoy regular access to outside play each morning and afternoon. They develop a positive attitude to physical exercise and gain confidence and increasing coordination as they use equipment such as bats, balls, sit-and-ride toys and tricycles. In poor weather children are able to participate in other physical activities such as music and movement. Children are developing skills in negotiating their own way and movement as they use equipment such as the balancing beams. They also have opportunities to develop fine motor skills and hand to eye coordination as they, for example, build towers with bricks and enjoy jig-saw puzzles. Babies and younger children use equipment such as push-along toys, rockers, small climbing frames and activity gyms to promote their exploration and mobility. They enjoy regular access to fresh air and outside play in the designated play area or by going for walks to the park and to feed the ducks.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a bright, purpose-built establishment which promotes effective supervision of staff and children. Resources are stored low-level in safe open units, shelves and drawers, which promote children's independence, enabling them to initiate their own choice of play and contributing to a child-orientated environment. All hazards are identified and minimised throughout the setting. Security is given high regard and the setting has good procedures in

place to monitor access and for the collection of children. Staff undertake regular risk assessment and an allocated health and safety officer ensures coordination of a monthly emergency evacuation and that hazards are identified. Furniture and equipment is well maintained, particularly in the baby room.

Staff have an excellent knowledge and understanding of child protection and are aware of the different signs and symptoms that may indicate that a child is at risk. They are aware of their role and responsibility to protect children in their care and to report concerns to line management. There are well-displayed procedures, in line with Local Safeguarding Children Board guidance, for parents or carers to read at any time. Existing injuries and incidents are recorded. There are designated persons within the setting with responsibility to ensure liaison with relevant agencies to safeguard children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children benefit from staff having a good knowledge and understanding of the 'Birth to Three matters' framework. The framework is used effectively to provide a stimulating environment in all areas and to support young children in their development. For example, worthwhile focus activities are planned, such as painting or using clay, and using the stacking cups or 'Winnie the Pooh' helter skelter, which allow children the opportunity to explore and investigate and also to develop fine motor skills. Babies and young children benefit from bright rooms where resources are attractively stored at a low-level, enabling them to have more choice and opportunity to initiate their own play. Staff work closely with parents to ensure care needs are effectively identified, catered for and individual routines met. Babies and young children benefit from staff interacting effectively and building trusting relationships, which has a positive impact on their security, self-esteem and contentment. They enjoy cuddles and being held and comforted when required and staff get to know the children well, being aware of their routines, behaviour, likes and dislikes.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff working in the pre-school room have a generally good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and plan a sound curriculum for children's learning. Plans show evidence that the stepping stones are covered and show some differentiation to enable all children, whether more or less able, to have sufficient challenge. Focus activities are interesting and purposeful for the children, such as modelling with clay and painting Christmas pictures. Staff working with the pre-school children use effective interaction and questioning to extend learning. For example, they discuss texture and shape when touching the cold clay, and use positional and descriptive language in natural free play and daily routines. Concepts discussed at story time promote further knowledge and stimulate curiosity about the overall theme. Children benefit from the recent reorganisation of the pre-school environment. As a result dedicated areas have now been established which are more interesting and stimulating for children's use, and where they can independently access resources which are attractively organised. For example, a table full of natural objects encourages the children's natural curiosity to touch, feel and smell the glass beads, loofah, sponge or cork mats. Children have opportunities to use the computer, keyboard, mouse and printer on a regular basis. They use them with developing skill and confidence.

Children's natural curiosity as learners is encouraged through their fascination with some local squirrels preparing themselves for hibernation. The children produce some wonderful art work

to showcase their increased knowledge and fondness for the busy creatures. The home corner is an area where they can explore their imagination and role play with peers. Observations of children's progress and development are undertaken. However, it was noted on inspection that they are not being used to share or promote children's learning with parents on a regular basis.

Children engage confidently with adults and peers within small groups and on an individual basis. They are able to share home events and recollect as they join in at circle time. Stories and rhymes promote speaking, listening and communication. However, there are missed opportunities for children to recognise their own name by, for example, encouraging them to self-register on arrival or by recognising their placemat at snack time. The book corner is comfortable and promotes children's independent use and children are able to handle books correctly and with care. They enjoy looking at books with staff; they settle themselves on their knee for a cuddle as they do so which shows how they feel happy and secure in their care.

Opportunities for children to develop mathematical understanding through general discussion and planned activities are mostly missed. For example, although numbers are sometimes discussed as part of general conversation such as "How many children here today?", "How many more cups?", "Which is longer, which is shorter?", there is limited representation of numbers through art work or display around the setting. Children have limited input on measuring and recognising various shapes. Mathematical experiences are included in the planning, but staff do not appear confident in this area. Consequently, this has an impact on children's spontaneous opportunities for mathematical development

Children's independence is encouraged and incorporated into planning in the setting and they benefit from self-selection of play resources and allocated free play opportunities. Staff are skilled at encouraging children to try things for themselves, such as putting on their own coat for outside play. As a result children develop confidence, self-esteem and responsibility. Children have an environment where they can enjoy their time and achieve. They are generally making good progress in their learning

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Children's needs are appropriately identified and met through the required documentation and close working with parents to share relevant care information on a daily basis. For example, staff working with the babies provide a report of activities and care provided and in other areas of the setting information boards are used. Parents are regularly advised of their child's learning through discussion with their key worker. Effective systems are in place to involve parents in the life of the setting through newsletters and notices to inform of current themes and topics. Parents interviewed on the inspection visit expressed their support of the group and were happy at the level of quality of care, and education, that their children receive.

Children show good levels of self-esteem and belonging at the setting, which is fostered by trusting relationships they build with their carers. For example, babies are soon comforted when upset and enjoy the close contact and cuddles they receive, and older children are confident to engage with adults or in a group as they share their thoughts and ideas. Children in the setting are valued as individuals, and practitioners have systems in place to ensure they are appropriately supported in regard to any additional needs. Staff have a good understanding of equal opportunities and provide a welcoming environment to promote an inclusive environment. Children's work is displayed attractively and prominently so they can see how

their contributions are valued, and resources promote positive images which help children become aware of a wider society and develop self-esteem and respect for others. Close links have been established with children from different countries, so that nursery children have a good knowledge and insight into how others live and the wider world.

Children behave well in the setting. They benefit from the positive behaviour management techniques staff use such as praise and encouragement, and the award of stickers and certificates for effort and achievement. Simple rules are displayed as prompts and are discussed regularly, encouraging children to be kind, considerate and to share. Children respond to gentle intervention and reminders from practitioners which has a positive impact on behaviour and helps them feel important and valued. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management are good. Staff delivering nursery education are appropriately qualified in early years and provide a balanced curriculum for children's learning. They have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and most are aware of required outcomes for children from focus activities. Staff benefit from the support of management who encourage staff development through staff meetings, effective supervision and training.

Staff within the nursery setting have increased their knowledge and understanding of the 'Birth to Three matters' framework, through in-house and external training, to effectively support younger children in their learning and development. All areas throughout the setting are effectively organised for children's access to resources and to provide a stimulating environment. All staff have clear roles, with some senior practitioners having additional responsibilities such as health and safety, behaviour management, equal opportunities and special educational needs, which ensures appropriate delegation and enables staff to develop expertise. Effective procedures are in place for new staff to ensure they are fully aware of working practices and policies of the setting. All documentation is maintained and stored to respect confidentiality as required. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that persons are fit and contribute to children's safety and well-being. The overall organisation of staff and children contributes to good outcomes for children being met in regard to the National Standards.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to review and update the written procedure relating to lost children. Since then the policy has been fully reviewed and is regularly updated. Parents have access to it at all times by way of the policy file which is kept in the reception area. Children benefit from the staff's increased awareness of their care and safety.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been two complaints which resulted in Ofsted setting actions. Concerns were raised that the setting had failed to obtain parental permission to take a child on a specific outing and had failed to obtain parental permission to transport a child in a vehicle. Concerns were also raised about the way in which the parent's concerns were dealt with, that the setting had failed to inform parents in a timely manner of incidents and accidents

involving their child and did not record accidents appropriately. These concerns relate to National Standard 3, 6, 7, 8 & 12.

In order to investigate the concerns raised, an inspector conducted an unannounced visit to the setting.

It was found that the procedures used for gaining permission from parents was not effective as they did not allow them to make informed decisions about specific outings. It was also found that the procedure did not allow for effective transfer of information between staff and management. In addition, it was found that there was inconsistency in the manner in which staff discussed complaints with parents.

In order to address the outstanding concerns, a number of actions were set for the Registered Person to address within set timescales. The Registered Person has amended the complaints procedure and the parental permission procedure.

The inspector was not satisfied with the hygiene practices in place with regard to comforters and not satisfied with the processes followed when checking the temperature of heated food.

In order to follow up the concerns, a number of action points were set for the Registered Person to address within set timescales. The Registered Person confirmed that the procedure relating to the storage of comforters had been amended to limit the risk of cross-infection and that all staff were attending additional training sessions in relation to food hygiene.

The response has been reviewed by a Team Manager who is satisfied with the details provided. The Registered Person remains qualified for registration.

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.

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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 routines for serving children's food at lunchtime. This specifically refers to the heating of food and serving at an adequate temperature for consumption
- improve opportunities for children to develop their independence by encouraging them to pour and serve their own food and drink at snack times.

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 ways in which parents can have regular access to their child's learning files
- increase opportunities for children to develop their understanding of number, shape and size
- increase opportunities for children to develop their understanding of the written word; this specifically refers to recognising their own name during everyday routines.

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