

# Puddles Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY343475
<b>Inspection date</b>	14 March 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Timothy Butcher
<b>Setting Address</b>	Hesters Way Community Resource Centre, Cassin Drive, Princess Elizabeth Way, CHELTENHAM, Gloucestershire, GL51 7SU
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<b>Registered person</b>	Desirable Childcare Ltd
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care

## ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

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

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

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

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

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

*Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

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

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

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

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Puddles Nursery opened in 2007 and is owned by Desirable Childcare Limited. It operates from a purpose built building based within the Hesters Way Community Resource Centre, in the Hesters Way area of Cheltenham. The areas available to the children include two playrooms, a sleep room, kitchen and associated facilities. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor-play area with impact absorbent surfaces.

A maximum of 31 children aged between one and five years may attend at any one time. There are currently 56 children on roll. Of these, 18 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 until 18.00 for 50 weeks throughout the year. Children attend from the surrounding areas of Cheltenham. The nursery currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs eight staff. Currently six staff hold an appropriate early years qualification and one is working towards a qualification. The nursery receives support from the Local Authority.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

Children are developing a very good understanding of healthy living and a high level of independence in their personal care. Older children know that washing their hands at appropriate times, such as following messy play, prevents the spread of germs and readily say so when asked. Younger children learn the importance of using an individual flannel for their hands and face at snack time as they are suitably guided by staff in these self-care skills. Children benefit from simple explanation and discussion about taking care of their bodies and know that they should put on coats to play outside to keep warm. Babies and young children receive plenty of warm interaction that keeps them calm and relaxed during nappy changing procedures. Staff follow nappy changing routines that rigorously protect children from the spread of infection. Children benefit from the comprehensive cleaning systems, such as for toys and play items. Cleaning checklists are used for all play areas and weekly and monthly lists for the sterilisation of toys.

Staff act in the best interests of children when they are ill and work closely with parents to meet their individual needs. There are stringent procedures in place for the administering of medication. Accurate records are maintained of all accidents and medication administered with parental guidance and consent.

Children enjoy healthy and nutritious snacks and meals. They learn about making healthy choices through discussion and are able to exercise choice during snack and lunch times. They are encouraged to be independent, for example, younger children are helped to hold cutlery and older children are encouraged to serve themselves at the table. Water is made readily available through out each session and children pour from the jug for themselves and for each other.

Children enjoy the regular opportunities for fresh air and exercise. Both the 'tots and toddlers' and the pre-school rooms have outside sessions each morning and afternoon, when the weather allows. Children thoroughly enjoy the suitable range of play and other equipment put outside for them. A child laughs with glee at stopping before the fence when on a trike and another concentrates hard to master the skill of pedalling. Children negotiate space, climb, slide and balance with increasing skill as apparatus is put out to match their general abilities. Staff have some awareness of children's physical development, however, the planning of activities has yet to closely focus on the extension of physical skills or on what each child needs to learn next. As a result children do not always have their physical skills consistently built upon.

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

The provision is good.

Children have a very safe environment in which to play. The provider has carried out a thorough risk assessment of the premises and has effective control measures in place to reduce the risk of accidental injury to children. Daily visual checks are undertaken of the premises and of the equipment put out in readiness for children. Access to the building is closely monitored and security is tightly controlled through the use of closed circuit television and a secure door entry system. Staff are vigilant and closely supervise children both inside and out. Children learn about keeping themselves and each other safe, for example, they are prompted to remember that it is dangerous to climb back up the slide and simple explanation is given why they should

not do so. Children show a good awareness about the safety rules and some spontaneously prompt each other about walking not running when inside.

Children benefit from the warm and child-friendly environment that has been created. The setting is made welcoming to children with colourful posters and many examples of the children's own work displayed on the walls, such as the 'Sammy the snake' mobile in the tots and toddlers room. A low-level mirror is positioned for children to explore. Toddlers pull themselves up to touch and study their own reflection. Space is used constructively in both rooms and well set out into defined areas. In the pre-school room some photographs and some examples of children's own work is sited at their eye-level. The layout for activities has been considerably re-designed in the pre-school room to make good use of the available space and to ensure that children now have good access to play materials that cover each area of learning. There is now clear opportunity for children to access writing materials and there is an area devoted to mathematical development. The room manager has a clear understanding of what children use as she monitors what is of interest to them. This now influences the planning of resources and the choice of materials that are presented. Children freely access resources themselves, many of which are stored invitingly in low-level storage units that are labelled with pictures so that even the youngest children have easy access.

Children have their welfare safeguarded because staff have a clear awareness of their responsibilities in regard to the protection of children and a sound understanding of the possible signs and symptoms of potential abuse. There are clear policies and procedures in place to support staff and to guide them should they have a concern about a child.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Toddlers, babies and young children take part in a broad range of stimulating activities. Staff have a sound understanding of the Birth to three framework. They have a clear understanding of how children develop and learn, and of children's needs and interests. There is a strong focus on developing children's sense of self, their confidence and their emotional well-being. Staff interact well with children and actively encourage their exploration of different textures, which stimulate their senses, for example, young children explore shaving foam on a shiny table surface. They are happy to move the foam around, to pile it up and to experience it between their fingers and its smell. Others push cars through it to make tracks and are encouraged to make letter shapes in it with their fingers. Staff have a secure knowledge of the Birth to three matters framework and regular observations of what children do contribute to the assessment process. Tracking sheets are used to monitor progress for each child but not all are up-to-date and this impacts on the overall effectiveness of the ongoing planning process. Staff have a good understanding of children's current abilities and this enhances the planning process so that children make at least satisfactory progress. Information is shared with parents about children's developmental progress on a regular basis through a review report.

Young children settle well as they are greeted warmly by staff who sensitively support them to separate from parents and carers. Staff support children to be emotionally secure through warm and skilful interactions. Staff provide high levels of reassurance and plenty of close contact to children until they become sufficiently self-assured to play independently and in groups. Consistent daily routines provide structure for children. Babies have their own routines followed and enjoy close contact with familiar adults who provide special time. Tots and toddlers do 'lots of wriggling' to nursery rhymes, such as 'the wheels on the bus' and other favourites.

They laugh with glee at the sounds they make with the musical instruments and their facial expressions show that some are concentrating hard to keep a rhythm.

#### Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are beginning to make at least satisfactory progress. Teaching is rooted in a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum in general and new systems for the observation, assessment and planning of children's progress are beginning to be used. These are beginning to have an increasing positive impact on the progress that children make. An overall system has yet to be fully implemented and planning for children's next steps in learning is somewhat fragmented at present. Planning covers each area of learning however and is sufficient to meet the general developmental needs of all children. Currently some assessment records are incomplete and are ineffective in influencing the planning process. As a result the learning intentions of some activities are too vague and do not provide enough challenge for some children.

Children have good attitudes to learning. They are enthusiastic and fully involved in a broad range of exciting and generally developmentally appropriate activities that fire their imaginations and capture their interest. Staff effectively support children's play and learning, and work hard to make the learning environment attractive and accessible to children. They have a general understanding of each child's stage of development as the size of the setting and effective methods of communication, contribute to the planning process. There are clear routines and children have the opportunity to express choice and to take an active part in planning their play. Staff note what is of interest to children and respond to their ideas; and some of this information is then used when planning future activities.

Children are confident in the setting and are developing their relationships with each other and staff. Although some children require adult guidance and support with sharing and turn taking during chosen activities, staff provide consistent boundaries, explanation and support children generally well to be social. Children have many opportunities to learn about taking turns, for example, they share hair dressing resources in the home corner. They spontaneously share the telescope and are helped to understand how to use it with discussions about concepts of 'bigger and smaller'. Children are encouraged to develop independence by dressing themselves to go outside. They pour water for themselves and others during the session.

Children have opportunities to recognise their written names and refer to these when finding their coat peg. They have suitable access to writing and drawing implements throughout the nursery. The writing area has a variety of materials that children are able to access freely. They make marks and practise pencil control through colouring activities. There is free access to writing materials in the role-play area. For example, when set up as a hair dressing salon, children learn about the use of writing as a means of communication in a meaningful situation. They make lists of items and pretend to write a bill. They exchange cash and put it in the till and take turns to comb each others hair. Outside children make broad marks on the ground with the large chalks made available.

They begin to link sounds during nursery rhymes and follow rhythms with rhymes. They are encouraged to draw the first letter of their name with their fingers in the sand and in the paint. Some are helped to write their name on the pictures they have made. They thoroughly enjoy some of the opportunities to sit and look at books with staff. Some children are enthralled at story time and avidly listen to the story that is told. They learn that print has meaning through looking at the book held up and help to turn the pages. They point at the characters and

pictures, and answer questions about what they see. They are sometimes asked to predict the story or to put themselves in the shoes of characters to express how they feel, such as when the witch flies to the ground. Staff sensitively develop children's language as they gently repeat back sentences using corrected words in conversations with children. They introduce new words and give space for children to express themselves, such as at story time.

Children use mathematic skills in everyday activities, for example, they weigh out ingredients on the scales and take turns to mix the ingredients with a spoon. They follow instructions and more able children ask questions about the process, for example, why butter has to be used to grease the cake tin. They notice the changes that take place when liquid is added and discuss the texture because they are prompted to think about similar textures from their own experiences. Alongside, younger children are happy to mould the mix and to explore at their own pace and in their own way. Children count in a variety of situations throughout their day. They count each other when lining up to go outside, on the computer, as well as in specific planned activities, such as adult-led play with large dominoes where they count, match, compare and recognise numerals and shape. However, useful questions to prompt children's problem solving skills are less in evidence.

Children explore design and make large and small models using construction sets and other materials. For example, three children work cooperatively together on constructing some three-dimensional figures with large link shapes. They explore and innovate to creatively build futuristic shapes then de-construct to make space guns to fire at each other. An area of space is set aside for construction materials each session and children make some choices about the materials put out. A child concentrates for a good period of time on his own Lego construction. Having creatively built his model to his own design he then engages his imagination to make up his own story about the other toy figures he has introduced. Children have regular opportunities to use the computer, and other information and communication technology. They have short sessions and a timer is available to enable children to observe the passing of time, for example, a child thoroughly enjoys the use of the voice controlled computer programme. He uses the mouse to restart the programme and gains in volume as he 'drives' the car around the track.

Children show interest in a suitable range of creative activities that stimulate their interests. There are a range of creative activities planned with different materials each day that children are able to freely access. Children spontaneously explore paints in a tabletop activity. They name colours, explore the manipulation and consistency of the paint as they cover the whole paper in dark blue. Documentation shows that children explore a range of materials, such as glue, jelly-water, gloop, spaghetti and compost. They develop their knowledge and understanding of the world through a range of planned and spontaneous activities including the use of magnets, binoculars, the growing and tending of plants, and through the use of reference books and posters, such as when they observe tadpoles.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are valued and respected by caring and committed staff who are keen to ensure that each child's needs are identified and well met within the setting. Staff help children learn about and celebrate differences through meaningful activities. They celebrate birthdays, talk about some other cultures and ways of life and help children share their own experiences with others. The setting has some multi-cultural resources that reflect positive images of diversity and although adequate are too few in number. Previously the setting had on loan some resources

to supplement their own, however, these have been returned and have not been replaced. The setting makes very occasional use of the local community through visits out. Parents and visitors from the local community are sometimes invited to share their skills and knowledge on occasion.

Children's individual care needs are satisfactorily met because staff liaise closely with parents and identify and record useful information to provide suitable care. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities have their needs closely met as staff work constructively with parents and other professionals to carry through individual education plans, and to ensure inclusion and to support progress.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents report positively about the setting in general, the approachability and friendliness of its staff and the good range of experiences provided for their children. Parents are asked to give their informed consent. Parents report that they are confident in the care provided and that the premises are secure. Clear information for parents and carers about the setting and care arrangements, are made freely available through wall displays, notices and verbal discussion at the point of pick up. An information booklet gives some information about the setting's policies and procedures, and written information about the Foundation Stage curriculum is provided to parents. Consideration is being given to how this information can better be presented. A 'Key Person' system is in place, however, not all parents know who their 'Key Person' is. The progress children make is regularly shared with parents and carers through a review report.

Children are usually suitably well behaved. On the whole they show care and consideration for each other and benefit from explanation about how their behaviour may impact on others. The behaviour policy has been reviewed and disseminated to staff and as a result consistency in approach has begun to be consolidated. Children are happy and settled and quickly become involved in activities and games, leaving little time for boredom or undesirable behaviour. Children respond to the positive approach of staff and are generally cooperative. They happily help to put toys away at tidy-up time. They are encouraged to share and learn to take turns as this is positively practised in a number of ways, such as at story time, during mathematical activities around the table and when outside taking turns to throw a ball. Children learn right from wrong. When staff are required to deal with minor upsets they provide simple explanation. Opportunities for children to problem solve for themselves, with guidance from staff, is less in evidence.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The quality of leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. The registered person has a satisfactory understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the nursery education provision and along with the room manager is meeting regularly with the local authority support worker to address the identified weaknesses in the education provision. A clear system for the on-going monitoring of nursery education has yet to be clearly established. There is a commitment to further enhance the knowledge base of staff in regard to children's learning. New processes now in operation ensure that each area of learning is covered sufficiently for children to make at least satisfactory progress given their individual starting points. Some processes have yet to be developed further in order to complete the cycle of planning and evaluation, and have yet to become effective in maximising children's learning.

Children benefit from the well organised environment where time, space and resources are used effectively to support independent learning in both rooms. Staff closely plan for a balance of appropriate activities and monitor what children find of interest. Younger children settle to action rhymes in the foyer so that they are calm and settled when returning from boisterous outside play and exercise. Children are generally happy and relaxed because staff are friendly and work well together to facilitate children's individual care needs. Children are well cared for and appear settled and content. Children benefit from the appropriate adult-child ratios. All staff are suitably vetted as recruitment and induction procedures are rigorous. All regulatory documentation is in place and reflect current legislation. Policies and procedures are maintained to promote the welfare and care of children. Staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

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

At the last inspection it was agreed that improvements would be made in regard to children's safety through the regular practise of the escape plan. A practise is undertaken regularly and as a result children are better prepared should an emergency occur.

The last nursery education inspection was judged as inadequate. Since the last inspection considerable improvements have been made in each of the areas identified. There have been changes to organisation and in staffing and the setting has been active in seeking the support of the local authority support teacher. All staff in the pre-school room now have an adequate understanding of the Foundation Stage and new systems for the observation and assessment of children have been introduced and have begun to be implemented. Planning now covers each area of development and children now have at least some opportunity to choose and plan their free play. Children are adequately engaged throughout the day and some of what they find of interest is now noted down and this information is used to inform the planning of future activities. Children are now making at least satisfactory progress.

The registered person now has greater involvement and a clearer understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the nursery education provision. Weaknesses within the education provision are in the process of being addressed, although a clear system of monitoring has yet to be clearly established.

The setting has improved the information about the Foundation Stage curriculum that is made available to parents and the staff and managers are aware that information provided through a range of formats will make the information even more accessible to all parents. Consideration is being given to how this information can better be presented.

### **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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### 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):

- continue to develop the systems of assessment; maintain consistency with children's developmental records so that they are used to closely inform the planning of children's future learning.
- continue to develop resources that promote children's understanding of diversity

#### 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):

- continue to develop and to implement a system to assess the strengths and weaknesses in the nursery education provision to ensure gaps are highlighted and addressed
- develop further the systems that track and record children's developmental progress so that they are used to inform the planning of children's future learning.

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)