

# Activeplay Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY263294
<b>Inspection date</b>	07 November 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Linda Patricia Coccia
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<b>Registered person</b>	Activeplay Nurseries 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 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?

Activeplay Nursery opened in 2003 and operates from five rooms in a building in Milton Regis, Sittingbourne, Kent. A maximum of 48 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.30 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 52 children aged from six months to under five years on roll. Of these 14 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery currently supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities, and also supports a few children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 16 staff, of whom 14 are childcare care staff and 13 of whom, including the manager and owner hold appropriate early years qualifications; two staff have recently completed qualification to level IV and there is one staff member working towards updating her qualification.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for by a range of policies and procedures which promote their health and well being. Staff are readily able to explain the medication procedures which are very well thought out and cover all eventualities. All paperwork, including accident and incident records are well maintained and confidential. Nappy changing areas are all screened to protect children's privacy and dignity. Children can help themselves to water during the day and babies and toddlers have their own labelled drinking cups and bottles. Children's basic needs are met.

Children are offered food which is healthy and nutritious. Food is freshly cooked and well presented. Staff who handle food have all completed food hygiene courses. The qualified cook maintains a well run kitchen and complies with all Environmental Health regulations. She and the provider produce a balanced, four weekly rota menu which is displayed for parents. Children also get involved in activities with food. For example, babies discover the texture of jelly as they squish it through their fingers and splat it on their trays. Older children cook cakes and biscuits. However, on occasion there is a risk of cross contamination, when children share cooking bowls and utensils. Overall, children's healthy eating is promoted.

Children participate in time tabled outdoor play every day. They happily use a good range of well maintained, physical play equipment such as ride on toys and climbing frames. Also available are sand and water play. In the summer house, children can rest whilst they play with musical instruments, role play equipment and look at books. Children have a nice range of choices for them to dip in and out of. Indoors, babies and toddlers ably use walkers, small slides and soft play equipment which help them to develop the skills required in learning to walk and move themselves about. Children enjoy physical play.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in four main rooms into which the children are divided according to their ages. An good range of safety gates and other equipment are used throughout. Handrails help children become adept on the stairs, which is particularly important for the children who use the upstairs rooms. On the top floor the safety arrangements allow children to move around freely between some of the rooms and enable them to take themselves to the toilet. The entrance area, the garden and car park have all been considered for security so that children are unable to leave the premises unaccompanied. The provider has also instigated a car seat loan service for emergency collections. Children are kept safe.

Children use toys and equipment which are clean, well maintained and easily accessible to the children in safe storage units. Toys are suitable for the ages of children using them. Staff carry out daily, written risk assessments on their rooms and on the garden before each group of children use them. The older children can happily explain what they have to do when they practise the emergency evacuation procedures. Children have the opportunity to keep themselves safe in an emergency.

Children are also protected by the good range of policies and procedures to safeguard children. The provider has recently attended a Safeguarding Children course held by the local authority. This has resulted in the revision of the current procedures, including the steps taken if allegations

are made against staff. The provider has appointed a lead person to deal with Safeguarding Children issues. Staff can also explain the provision's departure policy and what they would do to ensure that persons collecting children are suitable to do so, such as, using passwords, photographs and descriptions. Children's well being is promoted.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in happy, welcoming atmosphere where they settle well. They have good interaction with staff. They are involved and interested in activities and supported by qualified, experienced staff. The 'Birth to three matters' framework is used throughout the three younger age rooms as staff observe and record how children are developing and provide suitable activities to ensure children develop in line with the framework. In the baby room staff are actively engaged in constructing a sensory area, so that babies can experience smell, texture and lights, in addition to the warmth they get from regular hugs, cuddles, and vocal comforts from staff. This encourages them to become skilful communicators. In the one-to-two year room, staff get as mucky as the children who are becoming competent learners as they explore paint and other craft activities regularly. In the two-to-three year room, the children really enjoy an animated circle time as they search the room for the numbers and colours of the day. They are able to identify the letters in their own names and get a thorough grounding in the skills they will need to start the Foundation Stage at the age of three.

### **Nursery Education.**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The children in receipt of nursery education funding are making good progress towards the early learning goals. This is because staff are experienced, well informed, and have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage. A new system of activity planning ensures that all activities are geared to the needs of each individual child. Children's starting points are recorded and regular observations easily identify children's next steps. Weekly activity sheets include challenges for each child and which are part of the bigger topical plan. The children move freely between activities in a very relaxed manner. They choose what they want to play with, fully integrating the range of activities available. For example, they weigh cars and bricks from the construction area at the maths table. Staff are excited about recent changes and are confident that they can make the new system result in an even more enjoyable experience for children. Children enjoy a range of learning experiences at their own pace.

Children gain a knowledge and understanding of the world as they have opportunities to use equipment such as computers and calculators and are eager to investigate what they can do. One child discovered that a calculator can add together as he does on his fingers.

A wealth of children's pictures and craft work are displayed around the room, from pictures made from straws to marble and ball painting. Most craft activities, sticking, gluing, drawing, and painting are readily available to the children in the craft area. Children can also do more intricate craft activities such as mixing paints to discover different colours, in the craft room, where in small numbers, they are supervised by staff.

Children enjoy books, and reading each other stories and singing songs that they know are included in the stories. Children can sound out the letters of their names and identify letters spontaneously. They are aware that words are used for all different reasons such as on money and for making shopping lists. They enjoy music and singing and are confident when playing

instruments. For example, one child sang a modern song into a microphone while another child accompanied her on a freestanding keyboard.

Children are adept at using mathematical language. They easily identify what is bigger than, or smaller than, and can use other words to describe the same thing such as larger and littler. They enjoy weighing items and can say if one item is more or less than another. Staff have lots of photographic evidence of children happily playing games with different shapes and matching numbers.

Children learn about through the world around them, themselves, and their community through the range of topics they participate in. They have helped to raise funds for a variety of charities. They help look after the fish. They talk about different seasons and have a sense of time, such as planting seeds and bulbs in tubs in the garden and watching them grow. Currently they are watching the leaves turning different colours and noting the changes in temperatures.

Children participate in a range of physical play activities which help them learn to control their bodies such as using balance beams and plant pot walkers. However, they do not have many opportunities to experiment with bodily movement and control in their indoor environment.

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

The provision is good.

Children from a variety of cultures attend the nursery. The staff have a good understanding of diversity and provide a good range of toys, books and posters which show positive images of equality. When religious or cultural activities are planned, staff always consult with parents to ensure their children can join in. For example, during Halloween activities, one parent asked that their child be given other non-Halloween items to make. Children are always treated as individuals and children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children with learning difficulties or disabilities, or who speak English as an additional language, are fully catered for by a range of good procedures to ensure they are included. For example, staff can fully explain how they have face to face contact with children who don't speak English, work closely with parents to ensure they know words from the child's language, and provide comfort books which show photographs of parents, siblings and pets to ensure the child does not feel abandoned. One parent reported that she had received a great deal of support and help in obtaining outside help for her child from staff. She worked closely with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator to get a referral to a paediatrician and speech therapist. Children's individual needs are catered for.

All children receive a great deal of praise from staff for all sorts of reasons. For example, when they are considerate to each other, helpful to staff or just for playing nicely together. Children are always advised of the rules for the use of equipment or play areas such as, walking along corridors or asking to use the more intricate equipment in the unmarked boxes. The well written behaviour management policy gives parents information about the different strategies that can be used, but staff comment that they very rarely have to use any, as children are very co-operative and well behaved. Children play within well defined boundaries.

Staff work very closely with parents and carers. Parents are provided with information about the Birth to three matters framework and a wealth of operational information through written policies and procedures, a regular newsletter and posters and displays in rooms and hallways. The provider always checks with parents before changing any procedures or introducing new

ones. A variety of parents interviewed during the inspection, report that they trust the staff implicitly, are very happy with the service provided, and that their children are happy to attend. They all know their child's key-worker well and many feel that staff are approachable and reliable. One parent commented that it was like being part of a big extended family. Children benefit from continuity of care.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents whose children are in receipt of nursery funding, reported that they are very satisfied with their children's progress. Most of them felt they had a good understanding about the Foundation Stage as they had received written information prior to their child joining the pre-school room. Most are involved in their children's learning at home through the suggestions given by the provider in the newsletters and through discussions with their child's key-worker. They are all aware that they can see their child's progress folder at any time.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The provider uses a good range of policies and procedures to ensure that the staff working with children are suitable to do so. These include a rigorous and robust recruitment and vetting procedure, staff disciplinary procedures, and annual staff appraisals. The provider also completes an appraisal which she discusses with her manager.

The provider displays her registration certificate. She ensures all regulatory paperwork is in place and well maintained. For example, the operational plan is readily available to parents and attendance records include both staff and children. Staffing ratios are appropriate and there is adequate cover at all times, especially first thing and at the end of the day. Confidentiality is a high priority to the provider. She ensures staff abide by the written confidentiality policy at all times. Children's records are stored appropriately. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides

Leadership and management are good. The provider has recently attained professional status having completed her Early Years Professional Status degree. She and her manager fully encourage staff training and has a formal staff training and development plan. Staff report that they can discuss any training issues with her and can attend a wide variety of courses, both for their professional development as well as workshops which enhance the children's activities. The provider acclaims her staff achievements to parents in newsletters and wall notices, especially those staff who have completed qualification courses.

The provider welcomes staff input into the running of the nursery. They regularly contribute their ideas and suggestions during monthly staff meetings. Staff feel they are valued and consider they work well as a team. The provider and her manager ensure they are always available to support staff or discuss any problems they may be encountering in their rooms.

The provider has a full action plan for the building, the equipment and toys to be renewed, reviewed or changed and a wish list for the whole of the nursery. Each room has it's own list which staff contribute to and which are included in the main plan. The are slowly working through it.

The provider and the manager have appropriate monitoring systems to ensure the Foundation Stage is planned and delivered appropriately by staff. The manager monitors the planning and helps staff to provide a variety of ideas and interesting topics. The provider gets more involved

with monitoring the activities as she spends time with children. They meet regularly with staff to discuss children's progress.

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

The provider has followed the previous recommendation to improve the provision to ensure children's arrival and departure times are recorded; ensure children's medication is labelled; increase the range of toys and activities which give positive images of race, culture, disability and gender. The provider has now reviewed procedures to ensure parents record their children's arrival and departure times and label their children's medication. These ensure that children's health and safety are promoted. She has also carried out a review of toys, activities and images to ensure children have positive images of diversity ensuring children can begin to understand that all people are different.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since 1 April 2004 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):

- investigate ways to avoid cross contamination during children's food activities

#### **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):

- increase opportunities for children to experiment with different ways of moving in order that they learn to have more control of their bodies, especially in the indoor environment.

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)