

Play Away Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	502871
Inspection date	05 December 2007
Inspector	Ron Goldsmith
Setting Address	Langdale Road, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 5PY
Telephone number	01928 565 351
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Registered person	Grainne Mary McGovern-Scott
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?

The Play Away Day nursery was opened in 2001 and is one of two nurseries privately owned by the provider. It operates from a purpose built nursery centre in the 'old town' part of Runcorn. It serves the local community and wider area. It is registered to care for 70 children. There are currently 83 children aged between six months and four years on roll and they attend for a variety of sessions. Of these, 14 children receive funding for early education. The setting supports children who are identified as having learning difficulties. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

The setting opens from 08.00 to 18.00 five days per week. It is open all year round, except for bank holidays. The nursery employs 22 staff to work with the children. Of these, 19 hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in clean and welcoming surroundings where they develop independence and understanding in relation to their personal health and hygiene. Nappy changing is very well managed with the younger children, staff wear aprons and gloves and are conscientious in ensuring changing areas are cleaned and children have their own creams applied. Sleeping children and babies have their own cot and mat covers which are laundered daily. Clear details are provided for parents on the care and exclusion periods for children when they are ill, which promotes a pro-active approach by staff in minimising cross infection.

Children have snacks and meals provided by the nursery. These offer them a good selection of foods which promote a healthy and nutritional balance. Menus are changed on a regular basis to ensure there is a variety each week. Staff encourage children to taste different foods and flavours. Children have fish and meat as well as vegetables and fruit each day. The older children and staff eat together which provides a positive social time for them. Babies have their feeds as part of their routine. Water and milk are provided and the older children have access their own water bottles to re-hydrate. The younger children have regular fluids throughout the day which is monitored by the staff. Dietary needs are recorded and staff are vigilant in their approach.

Children go out on most days to enjoy regular fresh air and physical activities. Opportunities for more imaginative outdoor play are limited, although children do enjoy focused activities that are provided such as when they compete to move ducks down pipes by pouring water to move them downwards. They are energetic when pedalling, push and riding outdoor equipment. This ensures children's physical skills are well promoted. Inside they enjoy manoeuvring over an obstacle course and there are tools and equipment that promote the children's smaller muscle skills, such as through their creative and construction activities.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in bright, welcoming and child friendly premises, where space is organised to meet the needs of the children attending. The pre-school room has been organised into clear learning areas, so that children have a quiet area, areas for messy play, pretend play, space for physical indoor play and focused activities. Children have access to a range of stimulating toys and equipment that promotes their development in all areas. Most of these are accessible to encourage the children to make choices in their play. These free choice opportunities encourage the children's confidence and independence, as they choose the toys they wish to play with. For example, dressing up clothes and home corner. They eagerly take part in tidying away toys after use. Babies and toddlers navigate around furniture as they learn to stand and crawl and they can access resources which they grasp, shake and manipulate for themselves.

Children's times of arrival and departure are recorded by staff, and children respond confidently to their names at register time. Staff are good role models and help children to stay safe, reminding them about the dangers of running. There is a comprehensive risk assessment in place but this has not been successful in identifying some hazards in the outdoor area. Children practise planned emergency evacuation drills and therefore, they are learning to leave the

building safely and efficiently in the event of an emergency. However, these drills are not carried out frequently enough.

Children are protected from harm as staff are aware of their personal responsibility to safeguard children. All staff have attended some child protection training and are well aware of the reporting and recording procedures should they have any concerns about a child in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are settled, enthusiastic and keen to be involved in the nursery activities. The staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework very effectively in providing for the age group of children. Babies and toddlers enjoy a range of stimulating and enjoyable experiences including sensory and tactile opportunities which encourage them to explore and find out about their environment. Staff sit and sing songs with the babies, who respond to individual attention. The toddler rooms are exciting places to be with a variety of art and craft activities and free play choice where children can experience art and crafts or construction and enjoy making choices. This ensures the younger children receive a varied and fun curriculum.

Staff establish warm, caring relationships with the children which positively promotes the children's security and self-confidence. The younger children quickly develop their various skills through the range of exciting activities and good use of floor level treasure baskets which are relevant to their developmental needs.

Staff provide detailed information on the younger children's progress and individual needs through their observations and evaluation of the activities. Children develop their language skills through the staff's clear attempts to engage the children, such as through songs and stories and ongoing interaction including when changing their nappies. Babies and toddlers move around comfortably, to pull themselves up and around as they develop their crawling and walking skills.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The children are motivated and enthusiastic in what they do. Staff are well informed and knowledgeable in their implementation of the Foundation Stage curriculum. They plan a varied and balanced range of activities and this is well supported with a good range of equipment and resources. The staff are suitably deployed to meet the various needs of the children attending. Children have good opportunities to enjoy free play as well as smaller group focused activities. The systems for the planning and evaluation of the education curriculum are clear and detailed. Staff record children's achievements and transfer these to children's files. All areas of the curriculum are covered effectively and children are well supported and have challenges to extend their skills. The staff use their observations and assessment of their key children knowledgeably to plan for their next stage of learning which ensures the children continue to make good progress, although sometimes the observations are not put into children's assessments quickly enough.

Children engage readily in conversation with each other and the staff. They express themselves confidently and actively engage with the stories and through their role play. They often extend a story or familiar song through additional activities, such as building a scarecrow outdoors like the 'dingle-dangle' one they sing about. Mark making resources are provided and the children use these well. Children enjoy choosing and looking at books independently. Numbers and

letters are displayed around the nursery to help children understand that information can be relayed in print. Children are confident in their counting and some recognise the correct numeral, such as in the computer number program. Children are confident in understanding language in relation to shape, size, weight and volume and this is managed effectively through the activities and resources provided. Children use mathematical concepts, such as recognising whether something is 'more' or 'less than'.

Children have good opportunities to explore and investigate their surroundings. They plant and grow bulbs and have a sensory area, they dig the soil to find worms and bugs. Children discuss the changes of the seasons and weather. When winter is the theme they talk about ice and cold. Children make, design and use their own ideas in their construction and creative activities which are supported with a good selection of tools. They energetically sing 'jingle bells' or 'Rudolph' in preparation for the afternoon rehearsal of the Christmas carol concert. Children go on visits to places of local interest. Access to the computer is available throughout the day and children are competent in the use of the mouse and following relevant programs. The children enjoy regular music sessions. They engage in imaginary and role play dressing as a princess or engaging in dialogue with each about scenarios they are developing themselves. Children are competent in their ability to describe events and what they are doing as they relate family stories to the group.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are highly valued as individuals and are treated with equal concern. Their individual needs are effectively met as staff use detailed registration forms to find out about children's allergies, special requirements, routines, likes and dislikes. Children develop a positive attitude to others and have good opportunities to learn about the wider world through activities such as celebrating different festivals. Effective arrangements are in place to care for children with learning difficulties or disabilities. Staff work effectively with parents and professionals to help children reach their full potential. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children behave very well. They take turns, learn to share toys and consistently show consideration for others. They begin to understand right and wrong from consistent boundaries set by staff, who fully implement an effective behaviour policy. Staff provide age-appropriate explanations to help children understand the consequences of their actions and the reasons behind behaviour boundaries. Good behaviour is well valued and children receive lots of praise and encouragement throughout the day to help build their self-esteem.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff build strong and trusting relationships with parents, who are kept fully informed about the nursery through detailed information about the setting and their child's development. For example, newsletters, a prospectus, assessment records, notice boards, parents' evenings and detailed daily written feedback for young children. Older children benefit from effective partnerships with parents which is enhanced through, for example newsletters, information about the Foundation Stage and opportunities to discuss their child's development with staff daily or at a yearly parents' evening. However, the

setting does not do enough to ensure parents and carers can become actively involved in their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting is well organised and rooms are laid out to maximise play opportunities for children. Staff regularly attend and update training and have a good knowledge of childcare and education which they use to provide stimulating opportunities for all ages. Children benefit as staff are committed to developing their skills and have attended training, such as 'Birth to three matters', child protection, special needs, first aid and food hygiene. Staff are well deployed and work well as a team, consistently interacting with children to give them effective support and encouragement, which helps them feel secure and confident. Detailed and well presented documentation is in place, regularly reviewed and fully implemented by staff, to help keep children safe and healthy. However, the systems for ensuring staff are appropriately checked are not sufficiently robust. Children benefit from a well structured day with clear and effective routines to ensure they enjoy their time at the nursery.

Leadership and management is good. Staff have attended training and have a clear understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum to help children develop well in all areas. They use quality planning to provide a broad range of activities, with clear learning intentions for children. Effective induction arrangements help staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities and ensure children benefit from their time at the nursery. Effective review and appraisal systems help staff identify their training needs and their professional development has a positive impact on the children. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Six recommendations were made at the last care inspection, and four at the last nursery education inspection. For care, the setting agreed to conduct a risk assessment on the premises, develop the assessment system to aid future planning, implement a key worker system in the younger age group, include a statement about bullying in the behaviour policy, plan and record a range of activities for younger children and lastly to store toys in a way in which children could independently access them.

A risk assessment practice is now carried out, although at the time of the inspection it was not rigorously enough applied to the outdoor area and has been carried forward as a recommendation in this inspection. Through assessment all staff have a good understanding of children's stages of development. A key worker system operates in the nursery and the behaviour management policy now includes a statement about bullying. The implementation of 'Birth to three matters' has given staff the opportunity to plan and record a range of activities for younger children and toys and resources are stored in a way in which children can access them independently.

The setting also agreed to improve the planning of music sessions, provide children with a full range of technology and to devise and implement a rigorous system of monitoring and evaluating the provision. Music has been improved by providing regular music sessions for all children. Children use technology freely by accessing programmes on the computer independently. A number of methods are used to evaluate teaching and learning including peer evaluation and evaluation of learning objectives. Consequently, the quality of nursery education has improved for children.

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.

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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):

- ensure the settings risk assessment is effective in eliminating all hazards for children
- ensure all staff are vetted rigorously.

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):

- improve the ways in which parents can be fully involved in children's 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