

Playdays

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	322394
Inspection date	20 December 2007
Inspector	Margaret Patricia Mellor
Setting Address	27-29 Denman Drive, Newsham Park, Liverpool, Merseyside, L6 7UF
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Registered person	Susan Herrity
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 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?

Playdays was registered in 1998. It is privately run and situated in the Newsham Park area of Liverpool. Children use four nursery rooms for their care and activities. There is a secure fully enclosed garden for children's outdoor play. It primarily serves families living in and around the Merseyside community.

The nursery is registered to provide care for a maximum of 29 children aged under five years. It runs on Monday to Friday from 07.45 to 18.00 and provides an all year round service with the exception of bank holidays and a week at Christmas. There are 31 children on roll aged from six months to four years, of these three children receive funding for nursery education. It supports children with learning difficulties or disabilities and children who have English as a second language.

The nursery employs 11 staff to work with the children, of whom 10 have a relevant child care qualification. Additional staff are employed for cleaning the premises, gardening and maintenance. Staff receive support from Sure Start Services of Liverpool Children's Services

and an early years teacher advisor. They are a member of the National Day Nursery Association and are working toward a quality counts accreditation.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is safeguarded generally well. Staff act in children's best interests when they are ill, which is well supported by the detailed sick child policy and medication records. They help to protect children from the harmful rays of the sun, ensuring that they use sun creams, wear hats and play in the shade on hot days. Individual dietary needs are communicated well so that parents' wishes are respected and children remain healthy. Four staff have a relevant first aid certificate but the first aid box is not easily accessible for them to quickly respond to children's minor injuries.

Children's interest in a healthy lifestyle is fostered and encouraged. They enjoy opportunities throughout the day to be active or restful, according to their respective needs. Children relish doing puzzles, cutting with scissors, mark making and threading beads or cotton reels. They skilfully manoeuvre the mouse whilst playing on the computer with some help from an adult, consolidating their fine motor skills through fun, play and learning experiences. They love to be active and negotiate space well, responding with enthusiasm when climbing, hopping, skipping or exploring rhythm to music. Younger children show plenty of curiosity and have plenty of fun as they freely explore their environment. There are lots of chuckles as they crawl or bear weight on their feet to stimulate walking.

Children enjoy a variety of healthy food options. The lunch is particularly wholesome and served in ample portions so that children are well nourished. They relish fresh fruit every day, increasing their awareness of a range of different tastes and textures. Staff follow appropriate procedures for the safe storage and preparation of babies formula milk, contributing to their health needs. More-able children learn to listen to their bodies as they independently help themselves to drinks when thirsty or after exercise and toddlers develop their coordination as they drink from a feeder type cup.

Children are cared for in a clean and comfortable environment. Younger children begin to learn about simple personal hygiene through their daily routine. Staff take time to explain why being hygienic is important and more able children confidently talk about how washing hands helps get rid of the germs. Children build on their awareness through discussion and planned activities, such as visits from the dental hygienist. Staff themselves have a sound understanding of health care issues, helping to prevent the spread of cross infection, contributing to children's well-being.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children move freely and with confidence in the nursery as there are good safety arrangements in place. Staff vigilantly monitor access to the premises when visitors and parents arrive. This is well supported by the signing in and out procedures and effective systems for the collection of children in an emergency. Staff carry out a daily visual check of the premises to effectively address any areas of concern and minimise the risk of children accidentally injuring themselves. They follow appropriate health and safety procedures for checking the play materials so children

remain safe. There are effective and well thought out procedures for keeping children safe and well whilst enjoying outings.

Children are cared for in a well maintained environment where cleaning systems are organised to reduce risks. The playrooms are creatively organised by staff, allowing children to freely and safely access the activities. There are a broad range of toys for children to play with which are suitable for their age, whilst stimulating enjoyment. Children gain independence as they confidently self select play materials that interest them from the tables, trays and toy boxes at child height. They sit, play and sleep in comfort because the furniture is suitable for their needs. Children enjoy a variety of safe challenges on the portable toys and climbing resources in the secure outdoor play area.

Children begin to learn aspects of personal safety. They regularly practice what to do in the event of a fire and build on their awareness through planned activities during road safety week. Children have plenty of fun practising crossing roads with props they make and wear luminous jackets. They sleep in safety and comfort because staff are close at hand to record checks on them and respond to their waking. Children's well-being is further assured because there is a designated child protection co-ordinator. They have accessed safeguarding training and have a copy of the local booklet 'Your responsibilities if you have a concern about a child'. They demonstrate a strong understanding of child protection issues, making the well-being of children in their care a high priority.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have an enjoyable time in nursery and are making sound progress in all areas of their development. Staff are starting to use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to promote children's learning and development. They encourage children's learning through repetition. Children are involved in their play and eagerly choose whether to play in the home area, paint, look at books, play with the small world toys or sit at tables to do puzzles or join in picture games. They begin to explore using their senses through tasting different fruits, listening to music and respond gleefully when feeling the different natural resources in the treasure baskets. They discuss the smell and texture of the cake mixture, both before and after it is cooked. Children sit and concentrate to complete tasks, for example, putting simple puzzles together or building a tower with blocks. They enjoy listening to stories and singing rhymes.

Children are happy and relaxed, promoting their personal, social and emotional development. Younger children gain confidence as they begin to play sociably alongside one another and with each other whilst staff are close at hand for reassurance. They relish staff's close contact as they play with the toys and gleefully join in finger rhymes. They begin to develop a sense of 'Me, Myself and I' as they respond to their name, play with their toes and explore objects with their mouth. They are developing their awareness of their physical needs, seeking eye contact as a way of communicating when tired or hungry. They begin to repeat simple words they hear and sometimes point to shapes or colours when playing. Babies chuckle as they shake the toys that make sounds. Children show a sound awareness of how to behave and keep themselves healthy and safe.

Nursery Education.

The quality of the teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound understanding about how children learn the Foundation Stage and six areas of learning. Activities are topic based,

which are appropriate for the ability of children attending, whilst stimulating their enjoyment and engaging their interests. Staff evaluate to monitor the learning outcomes and are beginning to use observation to assess the children's progress and track their development through the stepping stones. However, assessments are not fully used to chart and effectively identify the next steps in children's learning.

Children are supported in small groups and staff are keen to motivate children's learning. They judge when to become actively involved and when to allow children to independently explore. During group activities, staff give clear and concise instructions. They explain how many spoons of flour are needed to make the cakes, and the rules of the game when matching pictures. Staff show a keen interest in what children do and say. They ask children about their painting and what they construct with blocks.

Children's creative skills are promoted generally well. They make models out of recyclable materials and respond with enthusiasm when playing in the sand or water. They love to decorate cakes they bake and respond gleefully, as they spontaneously dress up and role play in the home area. They have a strong sense of belonging and are proud of their achievements, which they eagerly share with others. Children happily show adults their drawings but much of the children's art work is adult guided. Therefore, their creativity through art and craft is not fully explored.

Children are happy, interested and involved in their activities, relating well to each other and adults. They demonstrate appropriate levels of independence for their level of maturity. Children wash their own hands, put their coats on and sometimes make their own sandwiches at tea time. They concentrate well and persist in tasks to achieve outcomes, for example, putting puzzles together and building with blocks. During planned activities, children count and develop their mathematical skills. When they bake, staff explain how long the cake needs to be in the oven. They demonstrate time with the clock helping children to recognise numerals. Children confidently count to 10 or more as they build a tower with blocks. Staff begin to consolidate children's learning with rhythmic activities but there are few numerals displayed in the environment or opportunities to attempt simple calculation in every day activities.

Children have plenty of fun as they develop their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Their curiosity and investigation skills are promoted generally well through interesting activities provided by staff. They listen with interest to the story about how the caterpillar turns into a butterfly and relish visits to the fisheries where they feed the goldfish. They plant cress seeds and learn that they need soil, sun, light and water to help them grow. However, there are few investigative resources for children to spontaneously explore and observe natural or made objects in the environment. Children delight in playing with the telephone, calculators and cash register. They particularly relish playing with programmable toys and begin to use reason and logic to move the mouse to match shapes. Children develop an appreciation of the wider community and enjoy visits to places of interest, talking excitedly about trips to the museum.

Children become confident communicators. They eagerly sing rhyming songs and join in discussions at story or circle times. They chat fondly with adults about their home life and what they do in nursery. They learn that print carries meaning through displayed words and captions and have access to a range of books for enjoyment. They competently hold books the right way up as they turn the pages. Children have many opportunities to practise their writing skills and mark making, with free access to a variety of writing materials and paper. They are proud

of their achievements which they eagerly share with others, fostering children's self-esteem. Many of the children recognise their own name and the names of others.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are very happy and content in nursery. There is a named coordinator for special education needs, who has a strong understanding of learning difficulties and disabilities. This sometimes involves them in working in close partnership with parents or other professionals. Children are all included and happily joining in the days activities. They attend from different family backgrounds and activities are non-gender specific. They enjoy celebrating special events in their own life's and develop some positive attitude towards others. They play with different nationality dolls, dress up in African clothes, push dolls in wheelchairs, do puzzles and look at dual language books. They learn about other cultures through festivals, such as Diwali when they make lanterns. There are few resources reflecting positive images of disabilities, therefore, children's awareness of people in the wider community is not fully promoted.

Children's self-esteem is nurtured in a positive environment where children are encouraged to feel good about themselves. Staff are good role models and use plenty of praise and stickers to acknowledge what children have done well. They are very polite and attentive encouraging children to express their interests and talk about what they are doing. Children are well occupied and very involved in their play and as a result behave very well. They are developing good social skills as they begin to understand what is expected of them. Children are very courteous as they spontaneously say 'please' or 'thank you'. Younger children begin to develop the concept of sharing and older children are supportive of one another as they willingly take turns. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's needs are very well met. They develop good levels of self-esteem and staff form close and caring relationships with children. New children settle well and are encouraged to bring things from home to carry, suck or play with. Adults recognise that this may help children move between home and a new environment. Parents are provided with a leaflet about the activities as part of the enrolment procedures. There is good ongoing sharing of information about the children. Staff take time to write the child's day diary sheet and chat to parents as they arrive. Newsletters and a notice board keep them up to date with developments. Parents comment very positively about their children's care, play and relationships with staff. They love to come along to activities, such as the Christmas party and eagerly support with charitable fundraising events. Children's continuity and the quality of care offered is fostered through this meaningful relationship between home and the nursery.

Partnership with parents and carers of the nursery education is satisfactory. There is written information displayed on the notice board for parents to view about the children's learning programme and early learning goals. Information about the Foundation Stage and children's learning is also discussed informally. Questionnaires welcome parents comments on how they perceive the quality of child care and education offered. They are not fully aware of their children's development records and there is no formal procedure for parents of children in receipt of the nursery education grant to meet with key workers. Consequently, parents are not actively involved in children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a safe and comfortable environment. There are written policies, which are understood by staff and work well in practice. The child protection policy, however, lacks detail about the safeguarding procedures. There are appropriate systems for the recruitment, induction and supervision of adults who care for the children, but appraisal sessions are less rigorous. There is written confirmation that staff are vetted and effective procedures so that non-vetted persons are not left unattended with children. Staff have accessed training, such as first aid and safeguarding, which also helps to provide an effective service for children. All the necessary regulatory daily documentation is maintained well, stored with regard for confidentiality and made available for inspection. Children's continuity of care is nurtured through the daily sharing of information with parents.

The quality of leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. The manager and staff work well together and this is reflected in the children's happiness, confidence and sense of belonging. There is a clear commitment to improving the care and education for all children. Staff are supported by an early years teacher and have access to resources materials. However, there have been few opportunities for staff to access training to update their knowledge of the Foundation Stage.

Children benefit from appropriate adult support through the experience of qualified staff, although they are not fully familiar with the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They are cared for in four age related groups and every child has a named key-worker, contributing to their happiness and sense of security. Staffing ratios exceed requirements affording children high levels of individual or small group support, helping to meet all their needs. Staff creatively organise the environment allowing for both active play and relaxation. There is a balance of activities, assisting children to develop their independence and create friendships. Children gain confidence and have plenty of fun pursuing activities that appeal to them with their friends.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection four recommendations were raised to meet the National Standards and improve the quality of care. These referred to safety and organisation. They have introduced risk assessment, obtained a copy of the local Safeguarding Children Board procedures and reviewed the behaviour management and equal opportunities policies. There were four recommendations also raised to improve the quality and standards of nursery education. They have improved information for parents about the six areas of learning but this needs further development to provide more opportunities for children to practise their mark making and develop their concept of more or less. To increase the range of programmable toys and review the frequency of children's assessments. Therefore improving the quality of care and nursery education offered.

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 complaint 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 accessibility of the first aid box
- continue to improve the range of resources that promote children's awareness of equality issues
- take steps to review the child protection policy, and staff appraisal sessions
- continue to develop staffs' knowledge of child development for children aged under three years.

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 opportunities for children to recognise numerals in the environment, and attempt simple calculation in every day activities
- increase children's access to investigative resources so they can explore and observe natural and man made objects
- improve the opportunities for children to freely express themselves in art and craft activities
- continue to develop methods for charting children's progress so they can be used effectively to identify the next steps in children's learning
- continue to develop opportunities for staff to update their knowledge of the Foundation Stage.

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