

Playmates Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY278594
Inspection date	13 March 2008
Inspector	Susan Mann
Setting Address	The Kings Centre, Coppard Gardens, Chessington, Surrey, KT9 2GZ
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Registered person	Playmates Nursery Chessington 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?

Playmates Nursery opened in 1980. It operates from three rooms at King's Centre in Chessington, serves the local community, and is registered to care for 30 children aged from two to under five years.

There are currently 62 children aged between two and five years on roll. This includes 41 children in receipt of funded nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week all year round. Sessions are from 09:00 to 12:00, 12:45 to 15:30, or 09:00 to 15:30.

There are eight staff - seven part-time and one full-time - who currently work with the children. All but one hold an early years qualification that is equivalent to level two or above.

The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted well by a range of effective routines and procedures. Children know to wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet to limit the spread of infection. Written policies, such as that on health and hygiene, provide clear guidance to help limit the spread of infection and maintain good standards of practice. Staff are trained to administer first aid, which means that children would be properly cared for in the event of them becoming unwell or injured during the day.

Children are well nourished by the healthy snacks and meals offered at the nursery. They enjoy milk or water to drink, and learn about how to maintain a healthy diet through planned activities such as Healthy Eating week. In addition, children sample a wide range of foods as part of their cultural celebrations of the families that attend the nursery.

Snack times are sociable occasions where children and staff sit together and talk about their day. Children are encouraged to review what they have been doing and discuss elements they have particularly enjoyed. In the Lions group, children take it in turns to prepare the snack. They peel and cut the fruit which helps foster their independence. Here, children comfortably sit around the table to enjoy their drink and food.

In the Cubs group, children sit in a circle on child sized chairs to have their snack. Children take it in turns to offer the prepared fruit pieces around, and choose what they would like to eat from the healthy selection. However, children's independence and comfort is not fully supported, as children are not able to place their food on a plate or table. This means that some children may struggle to balance their drinks, and those who are very hungry are not able to take more than a few pieces of fruit in the first instance because they have no plate to put them on.

Children benefit from fresh air and exercise because they play outdoors throughout each day. The nursery is committed to ensuring that children spend a large part of their day outdoors if they wish to do so. The nursery garden is well resourced, and organised to provide playing and learning opportunities in all areas of the curriculum. For example, some children demonstrate good coordination as they pedal small bicycles around, whilst other children are busily engaged creating a meal in the play house for themselves and a member of staff.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are safe and secure in the bright and well maintained premises. Staff are well deployed to provide a high level of supervision for children at all times. There is plenty of space for children to play. Children's work is presented in colourful wall displays. This shows children that their work is valued and appreciated. The learning environment in both rooms of the nursery has been thoughtfully planned to create stimulating and pleasant surroundings for the children. Children enjoy playing with a very wide range of high quality equipment, which is clean and well maintained. This makes it safe and inviting to use. Children may select resources themselves from a variety of low level storage, which helps foster independence through their making their own choices.

Children's safety is a high priority of all staff at the nursery. Each day, the premises are checked thoroughly to ensure that all hazards are made safe. Comprehensive risk assessments are carried

out regularly to ensure safety is maintained. Children learn about how to manage their own safety. Staff provide clear explanations to assist children's understanding of how to limit risk, such as why they should not sit on a table. Visitors, such as a fire fighter, provide further information to help develop their understanding.

Children are protected from harm and neglect because there are strong procedures in place to safeguard their welfare. Staff are trained and knowledgeable about how to recognise and deal with symptoms of possible abuse. The nursery child protection coordinator demonstrates a good knowledge of how to record and report concerns. This element of the provision is underpinned by a robust policy to safeguard children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled throughout the nursery. They enjoy playing with the toys, as well as participating in planned activities. There is a broad framework to the day that is flexible to accommodate children's interests and opportunities. All children are observed as they play to ensure that each is progressing and developing well. Activities are planned effectively to allow children to benefit from them as well as having fun. For example, a child enjoys making an Easter Card with yellow fur and glue. He carefully colours the 'eggshell' before sticking the fur pieces onto the outline of the chick. At the next table, a girl is busy making a collage picture of pasta. She uses glue and helps herself to sticking tape from the dispenser to fix the pieces onto the paper. Children demonstrate strong relationships with one another and with the staff. Younger children benefit from playing alongside older children who act as good role models for them. In turn, older children benefit from being with the younger children, because they learn to be kind and considerate.

Children spend a large part of each day engaged in free play. At these times, they can move between activities and resources as they choose, and they are engaged and fully occupied in what they are doing. In Cubs, children have some parts of the day when they come together in a group to participate in an activity such as registration, snack or music. Each of these contains valuable and enjoyable opportunities to support children's interest and development. For example, children sing 'Five Hot Cross Buns in a Baker's Shop' with great confidence, and many of them dance around to a familiar song with enthusiasm and enjoyment. However, at times these group sessions are too long to maintain all children's interest, and some become disinterested.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Children in receipt of nursery education may attend both the Lions and Cubs groups. All children attend the Lions group on a part time basis in their 'nursery year' prior to starting school. These children receive the majority of their nursery education in the Lions group and the remainder in the Cubs group.

The 'Lions' provides an intimate environment for children. Here, they experience an exciting curriculum with their peers that is innovative and delivered well. This is planned to be a good mixture of child initiated play and more focused activities. Children are enthusiastic as they participate in these and in the routines of the day, and they are wholly engaged. For example, a group of children have drawn pictures of their favourite stories. These accurately depict

elements of stories such as 'The very hungry caterpillar'. In a corner of the room, three children concentrate for a long period of time as they play a matching game with a member of staff.

Children in the Lions develop their self confidence and are very self assured. They take it in turns to be the 'Lion King' when they are the helper for the session. In addition, they can take home a toy named 'Dora' and chronicle what they do with her by taking photographs and by parents making notes in a diary. In the 'Cubs' children take home 'Pippin' for similar adventures. There are also a number of 'friends' - or dolls and stuffed toys - in the Lions group, which enable children to explore their feelings and emotions.

Children make good progress because the system of observation and assessment is effective. Staff know the children well and have a clear picture of their abilities and preferences. This is supported by strong assessment of their progress, which enables staff to plan each child's next steps. This information is used when planning the curriculum to ensure that all children are able to progress at their own pace. All children who attend the Lions group also have their own drawer and 'Special Lions Book', which is a folder of photographs and samples of work.

When not attending Lions, children spend their time in the Cubs group. Here they enjoy learning experiences and opportunities that are good enough to allow them to progress well towards the early learning goals. However, children's learning is not supported as effectively as when they are attending the Lions group. This means that children in receipt of nursery education funding do not receive consistent quality of educational provision during their week when shared between the two groups.

Children in the 'Lions' and 'Cubs' enjoy spontaneous opportunities to develop their mathematical skills. They routinely count and calculate as they play. For example, a child counts the number of children present to be 16. When another child arrives, a child correctly identifies that there are now 17 children present. Some children enjoy using a tape to measure objects outside. Children throughout the nursery engage in role play to foster their creative development. They enjoy dressing up and they demonstrate good social skills as they play cooperatively with one another in their imaginative scenarios.

Children enjoy using the computer, especially in the Cubs. They demonstrate good control of the mouse to operate simple programs. Children are encouraged to develop their language and literacy skills in a range of appropriate and play based ways. Children make marks and attempt to write their own names, many forming recognisable letters correctly. In the Lions group, children are following the 'letters and sounds' programme to develop their listening skills. Children take it in turns to wear their 'listening ears' hats, and pay great attention to the sounds of the environment outdoors. All children are learning to link sounds with letters through informal and planned opportunities as they play.

Children's learning and enjoyment is enhanced by an extensive range of visitors to the nursery. Some of these are parents who come to share their own special skills. Such visits have been from, for example, a train driver, a fire fighter, a nurse and a dentist. In addition, the nursery organises visits from external companies to provide interesting opportunities for the children. For example, recently they enjoyed a visit from a snake and its handler. Children were able to touch the snake and learn about how it lives.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children develop a wide understanding of diversity through sharing their cultures with one another. Families are encouraged to share their celebrations and national identity. Many parents are very supportive of this and come into the nursery to teach children about their culture. For example, recently children enjoyed a visit from a Spanish parent. They copied her Flamenco dancing and enjoyed tasting Spanish food. The parent also read to them in Spanish so children could listen to the sound and rhythm of the language. The older children benefit from this innovative programme, which encourages cultural awareness. This scheme has been devised and planned by a parent at the nursery, and allows children to focus on different cultures and countries that are relevant to the families attending the nursery.

All children celebrate their home life and own culture. For example, they enjoy looking at a book of photos that shows children and their families enjoying elements of their traditions, such as eating Christmas Lunch with family, or wearing traditional Caribbean dress. This element of the provision is exemplary. It is monitored by an inclusion practice checklist. This has been devised by the nursery to ensure the setting provides children with a wide range of experiences to help develop their appreciation of diversity.

There are several children at the nursery who speak languages other than or additional to English. Children are greeted in their home language at register, and translated words are displayed on the walls in the appropriate languages. Staff have learnt key words in each child's language to provide additional support to help children feel at home. The nursery uses checklists to evaluate practice in order that all children receive strong provision and to promote inclusion. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given a good level of support to enable them to settle well and make progress. The two special educational needs coordinators work together with outside agencies to provide effective provision. All children manage their behaviour well. Staff provide good role models for children to follow because they are kind and calm. Staff encourage positive behaviour through encouragement and praise, ensuring that children know their efforts are valued. For example, in the Lions group, children may choose a small toy from the 'prize box' for a special achievement.

Children benefit from the strong partnership that exists between the nursery and their parents. Parents are welcomed into the sessions to help with activities, and many take up this opportunity to have a meaningful role in the day-to-day work of the nursery. For example, a parent comes in to provide an art and craft activity. She works with the children as they do this, and staff prepare a simple plan to ensure intended learning outcomes are clear and consistently delivered. Parents are involved in the writing and updating of the nursery's policies and procedures. This means that these documents reflect the needs of the families who use the provision. Parents may speak to staff at any time to discuss their child's welfare, and may book an appointment to have a more detailed conversation if they wish. In addition, there is lots of information available to parents to view in the nursery hallway, as well as in regular newsletters. Parents are also informed about what their child has done that day as children wear stickers to indicate tasks they have done, such as handing out the fruit at snack time.

Partnership with parents with regard to the provision of nursery education is good. Parents are involved in their child's education. Parents learn about the foundation stage through helping in the sessions. In addition, there is detailed information about the planned curriculum and

topics displayed in the hallway and on the nursery whiteboard. In the Lions group, parents receive a short summary of the topics and shapes that children will be looking at over the next few weeks. Parents are well informed about their child's progress through both planned and informal meetings with keyworkers. This gives them opportunities to view their child's observation and assessment records with staff. If parents wish to extend their child's learning at home, then staff are on hand to offer appropriate suggestions for them to try. However, the nursery do not provide ideas of activities to do at home on a more regular basis to assist children's learning through play further.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are well cared for because the organisation of the nursery is efficient and effective. Recruitment and induction procedures are suitably thorough to ensure that adults working with the children are suitable and trained to give a high level of support. The provision is underpinned by a wide range of written policies and procedures that provide an effective framework for the management and running of the nursery. All required documentation is in place and accurately maintained, including attendance registers and accident records.

Leadership and management are good. The nursery manager leads a strong team of professional staff who demonstrate cheerful and friendly relationships with the children and their families. She has a clear overview of the provision of nursery education and monitors the effectiveness of observation, assessment and planning. She regularly evaluates the overall provision to make further improvements. This process has identified and supported the differences between the educational provision offered in the Lions and Cubs groups. The nursery manager is a strong role model for staff and children. She has a high level of involvement in the day-to-day running of sessions, and this gives her a clear picture of the quality of care and education. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection, the nursery was asked to consider a number of recommendations to further the quality of provision in care and education. These have all been addressed. In the provision of care, medication records are now wholly robust, and are countersigned by parents. Children throughout the nursery are able to select their own resources and toys. They play with a wide range of equipment that reflects positive images of our diverse society. Children enjoy long periods of free play both indoors and outside to meet their individual needs. However, in Cubs there are times when children's free play is restricted by the requirements of routine group times.

In the provision of nursery education, the system of observation and assessment has been reviewed to ensure that children's next steps of learning are effectively identified and included in the curriculum to allow children to progress at their own pace. Parents are able to view their child's records as they wish, as well as at planned meetings with keyworkers. Children's independence is fostered because they can now select resources such as art and craft resources and writing materials in addition to toys. In Cubs, children demonstrate their independence by taking it in turn to offer the basket of fruit to their peers. In Lions, children prepare the fruit by peeling and chopping it. Finally, story times are differentiated because children in the Lions group may enjoy a more complex story than those children in the Cubs who are younger and who may have a shorter span of concentration.

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):

- help children to develop their independence and enjoyment further by reviewing snack time so that all children sit at the table and have individual plates for their snack
- ensure that group times are organised so that children's interest is completely maintained

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):

- review the organisation of the provision of nursery education to ensure that all eligible children receive teaching and learning of a consistently high standard
- provide parents with appropriate ideas of how they can extend children's learning at home.

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