

Playbox Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY363646
Inspection date	16 July 2008
Inspector	Julie Wright
Setting Address	Playbox Day Nursery, 9a Treyew Road, TRURO, Cornwall, TR1 3AN
Telephone number	01872 222571
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Registered person	Happy Days Day Nurseries Limited
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?

Playbox Nursery is one of several nurseries owned by Happy Days Day Nurseries Ltd. It opened in 2007 and operates from its own detached premises. It is situated in the city of Truro, Cornwall.

A maximum of 46 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 82 children on roll, 30 of whom are in receipt of funding for nursery education. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 until 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed play area. Children generally come from a wide catchment area.

The nursery employs 14 staff, the majority of whom have appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from a qualified teacher employed by the nursery chain.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health and welfare is protected through the implementation of relevant policies and procedures. Staff are conscientious in their hygiene practice, for example, as they regularly clean the tables. Older children have a good understanding of general hygiene routines, such as, when they should wash their hands. They develop independent skills and become competent in their personal care. The sickness policy is clear and prevents the risk of illness and infection for children. Accident and medication details are accurately maintained and the majority of staff have current first aid certificates.

Children's dietary requirements are known and met well in the setting. The nursery employs a cook and they take pride in the provision of freshly prepared and healthy produce. The menus for meals and snacks are displayed for parents. The main menu covers a two week period, which may provide limited variety for some of the children. Lunchtime is reasonably well organised, although some children have to wait for some time at the table. For example, as children go in turn to wash their hands and then one at a time to serve themselves. Mealtimes are sociable occasions and children relish their food. They have frequent drinks and learn that water is good for them. Older children know that 'dehydration' could make them feel dizzy or poorly. The pre-school children have a safe kitchen area, where they help to prepare their 'café style' snacks. This provides very good opportunities to develop independent skills, such as in cutting and slicing.

Staff plan interesting and fun activities to promote children's physical skills and coordination. For example, during 'Circus Week' children attempt to juggle, 'hook a duck' and have tries on the coconut shy. They enjoy playing football and take part in group games with the parachute. Staff also promote other areas of learning as children play outside. For instance, children use bright coloured chalks to draw on the path. Children make creative mobiles which are then hung from the branches of the trees. Children have regular outdoor play opportunities as the groups take turns to play outside. They also benefit from use of the 'rumpus room' when weather restricts use of the garden.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in secure and welcoming premises. Suitable procedures are in place in respect of maintenance. Each of the group rooms have good quality and well maintained resources. Toys and equipment are age-appropriate and support children's learning and development. Children move around with confidence and show keen interest in their surroundings.

Detailed risk assessments and routine checks ensure that children are safe and hazards minimised. Children learn about safety in everyday situations and planned topics. For example, they know that sun cream, sun hats and sunglasses protect them in warm weather. They become aware of fire safety through regular practises of the drill. A 'lollipop' person brings relevant resources and talks to the children about road safety. Children also become aware of people who help them, such as, police officers and medical staff.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as staff have a clear understanding of the policies and procedures to protect them. The required information is up to date and parents receive clear information about the safeguarding policy.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children benefit from highly effective and stimulating care throughout the nursery. Staff are skilled in their understanding of children's individual development and plan an excellent range of activities. Children are consistently well cared for in three areas, the baby room, toddlers and pre-school. Planning includes all aspects of the Birth to three matters framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum. This is being further developed in preparation for the new Early Years Foundation Stage framework. Children make considerable and rapid progress in their learning and development. They show great interest and delight in the many play opportunities available to them. Babies feel very secure as they are carefully nurtured by the staff who work with them. They explore their environment and play happily alongside each other. Babies are intrigued by the sensory play experiences, for example, they splash and pour with a spoon in the 'gloop'. They sit on the floor together in their nappies and examine textures and smells of foods. For instance, they swirl baked beans, mushy peas or custard in a tray. Paint is used for simple mark making as they dab with brushes and their fingers. Babies crawl independently to the accessible toys and play materials, selecting and examining resources. They respond to their own images in the low level reflective surfaces, which develops their sense of self. Staff constantly engage the babies' interest, interacting very well with them. Babies repeat words and sounds, modelled by staff, and thoroughly enjoy familiar nursery rhymes.

In the toddler room children are aged from two to three years. They are equally well supported and settle quickly into the group. This is due to the vigilant transitional arrangements from the time children attend to when they leave. Staff also operate a thoroughly effective key worker system, which ensures that all children form secure relationships and attachments to significant people. Toddlers have similar play opportunities to the babies, which staff skilfully extend to provide more challenge. For example, toddlers mix powdered potato with water, spoon butter for baking and play with jelly. They make patterns in shaving foam and create different effects with paint, such as, spray painting. Simple mark making becomes more complex, for example, their 'self-portraits' are impressively detailed, considering their ages. Staff provide small group activities, for example, they put the tables together with a large piece of paper and crayons. This positively encourages the younger children to develop social skills and begin to share. Toddlers are focussed in their activities and play exceptionally well together. They play constructively with the track on the floor, helping each other to put the pieces together. Staff provide a very good balance of organised activities and free play for children. They skilfully recognise when to intervene, or when to allow children to make discoveries by themselves. Their planning and organisation of the environment provides highly purposeful play opportunities for children.

During school holidays staff provide fun filled activity weeks for the children. They have a more relaxed and flexible approach to planning, but still ensure that children continue to learn through play. They have themes, such as, 'Circus Week', 'Craft Week' and 'Beach Week.' Children join in the exciting activities with enthusiasm, which culminates with their garden barbeque.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. The meticulously planned programme of activities effectively promotes all areas of the children's development. Staff use their frequent observations to plan for children's individual next steps in learning. During group activities they use their expertise to extend and challenge children's abilities. Staff fully understand the children's capabilities and consistently promote their learning. They quickly adapt the programmes to suit the children's needs and follow their interests. For example, a planned activity is deferred to another time because all the children are engrossed in their play. Staff have innovative ideas for activities and use everyday situations to continuously extend children's learning.

Children concentrate very well and listen carefully to staff and each other. They have an excellent understanding of what is expected of them. The pre-school children have exemplary social skills and are highly confident in their approach. They relish their time in the setting, showing a keen interest and enthusiasm to the activities. Children are highly confident, inquisitive and imaginative in their play. They willingly and enthusiastically contribute to group sessions, such as, circle time. Children make interesting observations as they explore and discover in play. They use highly descriptive and complex sentences, making considerable progress in their language development. Children are very proud of their own photographs and achievements, which they are delighted to talk about. They are also keen to look at each other's pictures, which shows their developing interest in others. Children show care and concern, for instance, by offering help to their friends.

Children take part in a wide range of activities which effectively promote communication, language and literacy skills. Staff ensure that areas are very well resourced with materials to consolidate children's learning. For example, children complete a planned 'writing' activity and then in free play they independently select and use writing materials. Children recognise their names and simple signs, which help them to learn that print has meaning. They are aware that there are different languages and use simple words within the daily routine. For instance, at registration time they respond with 'Bonjour' to the member of staff. Children listen intently to stories and thoroughly enjoy interactive tales. They select books independently, looking at them carefully and handling them with good care.

Mathematical development is very well promoted throughout all activities. Children are highly confident as they count items, put things in order and make sequences. They make interesting graphs, such as, to indicate how many people have a particular hair colour. Children show tremendous interest as they measure and compare size, for example, as they see things grow. In sand and water play they clearly demonstrate their understanding of capacity, carefully filling and pouring from measured containers. Staff actively engage in children's play and prompt simple problem solving. For instance, in the role play area they suggest scenarios for the children to think of a solution to.

Children have extensive play opportunities which develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. They show sustained interest in the computer games and are competent in its use. A range of games are available to extend and challenge learning to suit children's individual levels of development. Children concentrate for long periods as they play. They investigate and discover cause and effect with great interest, for instance, as they consider how things work. In the dry sand children thoroughly examine a container and learn by themselves how to control the flow of sand. The outdoor area provides excellent opportunities for children to learn about nature. They plant seeds, flowers and vegetables and take great delight in their results. The fruit trees in the garden are used to full advantage as children collect, count and then cook the apples. They understand changes in food processes through frequent baking activities. For

example, they see consistencies change as liquids become solid. They help to take left over food from the kitchen to the compost heap, which prompts interesting discussion and thought. Children develop an impressive awareness of the wider world. This is particularly well reflected in their imaginative play. They mention other countries by name as they pretend to go on their holidays. They consider different forms of travel and are confident in what they will need to take with them. Children understand varying weather conditions, seasons and appropriate clothing. Cultural celebrations are included in planning and provide children with good opportunities to consider similarities and difference.

Children are highly competent in their use of physical play equipment. For example, children accurately aim and hit with bats and balls. They take part in a very good range of activities and games including football and obstacle courses. Children balance themselves and walk carefully along the course, stepping up and down the different levels. They have excellent control and spatial awareness as they manoeuvre themselves around on wheeled toys. With parental permission children are taken in small groups for swimming sessions, which further extends their physical play experiences. They rapidly develop their fine motor skills and hand to eye coordination. For instance, children cut very carefully around the outline of a picture as they make a collage.

Children play exceptionally well in the role play areas. They are highly imaginative as they play together, suggesting ideas as they pretend. For example, they talk about holidays at the 'travel agents' and then pack a suitcase. Children sit in the cardboard boxes and imagine that they are travelling by plane or train. They use puppets and soft toys for storytelling, with good improvisation. For instance, the 'cosy corner' becomes a 'bear cave' for re-enacting a popular story. A wealth of bright displays of children's creativity is displayed around the setting. These are also displayed at child height, which promotes children's self-esteem and provides further opportunities for them to recall an activity. Children use an extensive variety of play materials in creative play. They also express creativity as they enthusiastically sing, dance and play musical instruments.

Overall, children make excellent progress towards the early learning goals given their capabilities and starting points.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are effectively met in the setting. Staff demonstrate a clear understanding of the equal opportunities policy and implement it well in their everyday practice. They have secure awareness of the children's personal requirements, preferences and personalities. Children take part in a variety of celebrations and activities which help them to become aware of diversity. These reflect other cultures and their own heritage. They take part in fundraising events and visit a local elderly person's home, which helps them understand that people have different needs. Resources around the nursery provide children with positive images of similarities and differences in people.

Children are very well behaved, cooperative and constructive in their activities. They clearly understand the routines and respond quickly to simple instructions. For instance, when staff ask the children to form orderly lines, as they go out to play. Younger children have visual aids to record and encourage their progress. For example, they have sticker charts to mark their success in potty or toilet training. In the toddler room there is a 'Special Day' chart, which is changed frequently to ensure that each child is celebrated. Children develop confidence as

they see their own photographs and creative achievements displayed. Staff use positive language throughout activities and promote children's self-esteem. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff provide a warm welcome to parents in the setting and promote positive working relationships. Effective systems are in place to share information on a regular basis and ensure consistent care. These include frequent discussions and the use of daily diary sheets. The setting's brochure contains all relevant practice details. There is also a file for parents on the policies and procedures. Monthly newsletters advise parents of forthcoming events and activities in the nursery. Children borrow books, which helps parents to be involved in their learning. Parents also bring items from home to contribute towards a current topic. For example, photographs of the children on holiday to link with the 'holiday' theme. Parents are invited to take part in fundraising and social occasions at the setting. Staff invite parents to consultation meetings to review their children's progress. Parents are aware that staff keep observation and development records, although they do not formally contribute to these. Staff provide questionnaires for parents as a form of consultation and evaluation. The majority of parents commend the quality of care and highly value their relationships with staff.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are secure, happy and very well cared for in the nursery. Staff provide stimulating activities and consistent routines for them. The key worker system is highly effective in promoting good communication systems and relationships. Staff work very well together and demonstrate a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Recruitment and vetting procedures are robust to fully ensure that children are cared for by suitable persons. Staff induction and student placement procedures are appropriate and clearly put into practice.

Leadership and management is good. Most of the staff have appropriate childcare qualifications and all have experience in the care of young children. They are selected to attend available training to update their knowledge in childcare practice. Management and staff effectively evaluate and monitor their practice in the nursery. They identify areas for future development, such as, to increase specific resources, to improve access and to further develop the outdoor play opportunities for children. Staff attend regular team meetings and staff appraisals. Records and documentation are well organised and maintained in good order. Policies and procedures are comprehensive, available to parents and effectively contribute to the care, safety and welfare of children. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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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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):

- improve the organisation and arrangements at mealtimes to minimise the times that children are waiting.

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):

- develop opportunities for parents to contribute to the children's ongoing records of observation and achievement (also applies to care).

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