

# Playbase Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY330130
<b>Inspection date</b>	14 May 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Carys Millican

<b>Setting Address</b>	Playbase Ltd, Beezon Road, KENDAL, Cumbria, LA9 6EL
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<b>Telephone number</b>	01539 737472 or 0773 333 2443
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<b>E-mail</b>	info@playbasenursery.co.uk
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<b>Registered person</b>	Playbase Limited
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<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
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<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care
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## 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 satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Playbase Nursery is run by a privately owned limited company. It opened in 2006 and operates from within eight playrooms and a soft play area, in a converted building situated in the centre of Kendal, Cumbria. A maximum of 102 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open from Monday to Friday from 07.30 until 18.30. A holiday play scheme operates during school holidays for all children under eight years. Nursery children access a fully enclosed outdoor play area. A soft play area is available as an outing for children attending the nursery outside public opening hours.

There are currently 95 children aged from three months to under eight years on roll. Of these, 21 children receive funding for early education. The nursery serves children from the local area and surrounding districts. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and children with English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 29 members of staff, of which, 19 hold early years qualifications. Three staff are working towards an early years qualification. The nursery is a member of the National Day Nurseries Association.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted by staff who have a secure knowledge of the setting's health and hygiene policy and procedures. Children's hygiene practices are fully promoted throughout the nursery. Younger children are provided with individual face cloths and, depending on their age, wipe their own face and hands. Older children are encouraged to see to their own self-care needs using the toilet facilities close to the pre-school room. Children confidently wash and dry hands before eating, after toileting and after playing outdoors. Older children enthusiastically explain that they 'must wash hands to keep them clean'. Children's growing independence is aided by the provision of child sized toilets, sinks and accessories, for example, steps and potties. They access these areas easily and liquid soap and paper towel dispensers are positioned at their height. Children learn the importance of keeping areas safe and clean, and dispose of used paper towels in the waste bin. Nappy changing procedures are meticulously followed. Protective clothing is worn by staff and changing mats are wiped down before and after each individual nappy change. Children's welfare and the protection of other children are fully considered by staff following the sick child policy. Children's welfare is promoted as the required documentation is maintained and parental permission is in place. Staff complete care sheets for all children up to pre-school age.

Children benefit from the healthy eating programme developed in the nursery. They learn about healthy eating and the importance of a balanced diet, and benefit from a varied diet of home cooked meals from several countries. Children access milk or water and a selection of healthy snack options during mid morning and mid afternoon. They thoroughly enjoy the freshly cooked healthy meals prepared for them by the cook. Children benefit from the social occasion created at meal times when children sit together in small groups with staff members. Children's independence and self-help skills are encouraged by staff. Older children pour their own drinks and help themselves to the bowl of fruit provided. Young babies sit comfortably in highchairs and older babies sit at small tables; their growing independence is encouraged as they attempt to feed themselves. Babies benefit from the comfort of being held when bottle feeding. Children's individual needs are met by staff following their dietary needs, routines and parental wishes closely. Details of allergies are confidentially recorded and kept in the kitchen for staff. Children are provided with suitable containers of fresh water which is accessible to them at all times. Younger babies are offered fresh water hourly which is recorded by staff on care sheets.

Children benefit from a range of physical activities which contribute to their good health and all round development. Plans show how physical play is encouraged within daily outdoor activities for most children. Children enjoy playing outdoors in the enclosed play area and they access the soft play facility when not in use by the public. Outings to the soft play facilities are arranged when ratios allow. Staff support children well in outdoor activities and take indoor activities outside at the request of the children. Children enjoy physical play as they enthusiastically push their scooters around the safety surfacing, practising their gross motor skills. They develop a sense of space as they run around. Children play ball games as they throw and catch the different sized balls. They climb onto the climbing frame and crawl through the metal tube to the other side. They swing round on the metal roundabout toys and hide in the wooden tepee playhouses. Indoors, younger children move about freely in spacious rooms. However, non-mobile babies do not have daily access to fresh air or go on regular walks. Children benefit from visits to local attractions, such as the town centre shops and local castle. Children rest according to their needs. Babies sleep in a designated sleep room which is monitored by

a staff member staying in the room when babies are sleeping. Older children rest and sleep on mats or cushions in their playroom. Each child has their own sheet which is cleaned and laundered after each use.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are kept safe and secure when playing indoors and outdoors. Risks of accidental injury to children are minimised by staff using detailed risk assessments and completing visual checks in all areas children use. Children access a safe indoor environment and cannot leave the premises unsupervised. Inner doors are securely closed and key pads are used on all exterior doors. Socket covers are placed in all electrical points and any trailing wires are positioned out of sight. The outdoor play area is fully enclosed. Staff ensure children's safety by padlocking the gate when children are playing. Staff supervise the children's play at all times. Staff apply sun cream and make sure that children with sun hats supplied by parents wear them when playing in the outdoor play area. Children are protected by the health and safety practices and procedures that staff follow to help prevent accidents. Staff check play equipment for any damage, including loose or broken parts, and rooms are checked before children use them. Children learn about how to keep themselves safe. They line up whenever they go out or come back indoors and are escorted safely to the respective rooms. Children follow the gentle reminders by staff to hold onto banisters and not run in the corridors. Children benefit from visits from 'people who help us' such as the local fire fighters. These experiences are beneficial in raising children's awareness of personal safety. Fire fighting equipment is in place and all fire doors are unobstructed. The fire evacuation procedure is practised by children and staff regularly and alarms tested weekly. Children are kept safe on outings as adult to child ratios are maintained, permission is obtained from parents and documentation is in place.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment. The rooms used by the children are spacious and well maintained. Children confidently move around their surroundings and help themselves to a range of safe, suitable and age-appropriate resources that are accessible to them. Most areas of the nursery and playrooms are stimulating and interesting with several colourful themed displays on the walls. However, most displays are adult directed rather than completed by children. The non-mobile baby playroom has limited low-level visual stimulus. There are no hanging mobiles or interesting coloured textured materials for babies to visually explore. Children generally feel a sense of belonging. Their art and craft work, such as paintings, is displayed and children have their own named coat peg and storage drawer. Children's health and safety are maintained. Babies are monitored closely by staff when sleeping and bedding is changed after each use. However, in hot weather the room temperatures throughout the nursery are high and at an uncomfortable level for both adults and children.

Children are protected by staff who have a sound knowledge and understanding of child protection policies and procedures. Children's safety and well-being are enhanced by the staff's commitment to undertaking additional training to update their knowledge of child protection issues. The child protection statement is in place and clearly explains the procedures to follow. The policy contains the details of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, social service duty team and the police. Children's general safety and welfare are met by the documentation maintained by the nursery. Children's individual record forms contain information including contact details. The details and passwords of persons allowed to collect the children are recorded on the office computer. Visitors sign in at reception and the hours of attendance of staff and children are recorded in each room throughout the nursery.

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

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time in the nursery. They are very happy and contented, and settle easily into the warm and welcoming atmosphere created by experienced practitioners. Children are enthusiastic and self-assured in their play as they help themselves to the resources provided. Children progress and achieve well. Staff use their good understanding of early years guidance, such as the 'Birth to three matters' framework, in their daily practice and well-documented planning. Children who are new to the nursery settle easily. Staff are sensitive towards children's individual needs. Transition and settling in periods allow children to move into the new rooms and older age groups when they are ready. Children are eager to participate. The youngest children make good progress because staff recognise the uniqueness of each child. Close and caring relationships developed between key workers and children increase children's sense of trust and help them develop a strong sense of self. Good quality adult-child interactions are supportive of early communication skills. Children begin to make sense of the world and express their ideas as they join in a diverse range of experiences. Babies enjoy relaxing in the cushioned area of the room surrounded by soft toys and musical activity toys. Toddlers enjoy creative activities such as making collage pictures and painting. These activities and resources support their development and learning and are closely linked with the planning in place, which is flexible and follows children's interests.

Children enjoy the small group activities and their attention is fully maintained. Young children play with the play dough. They roll out the dough and use a number of cutters to make different shapes. Children make sound relationships with adults and other children. They learn to share and take turns, for example, when making their crown or shield. Children begin to consider the needs of others as they welcome new children into the group. Older children's enjoyment is supported by experienced staff who are flexible to children's requests to change planned activities indoors and go outside. They take the large empty boxes outdoors and make their castle in the sunshine. Children's independence and self-help skills in practical activities are encouraged, although this is not as consistent in the pre-school class, for example, when pouring their own drinks. Children develop confidence and self-esteem through the interaction, care, love and attention they share with the staff. Children access a range of outdoor activities in play areas that encourage physical development. Younger children play on sit-and-rides and play ball games. Older children use climbing frames and roundabout toys. Children enjoy singing songs in circle time activities and listen to others as they speak in large groups. Younger children are observed by staff during their play. Written progress books are maintained showing the steady progress children make, and scrapbooks of children's work are collated. Children listen to instructions. They understand the routine which allows flexibility to accommodate the needs of all children and allows them sufficient time to explore and develop ideas. These routines enhance children's learning. Children eagerly join in the activities provided and their concentration levels are suitably maintained. Opportunities to engage children in conversation are fully explored by experienced staff members during play opportunities and within the daily routine. Children talk to each other at snack time and circle time. Children enjoy dressing up. They play in the role play area with the pretend food, making lunch and repairing the environment with their pretend tools. The resources are within easy reach of the children. Most are contained in clear containers or in labelled boxes and small drawers. Children help themselves to these resources and play harmoniously with other children. Quiet activities allow younger children to snuggle up to their key worker as they look at books together. They enjoy mark making with crayons and chalk, and play enthusiastically in the sand and water.

Children are valued. They are treated with trust, concern and respect by staff, who have a kind and caring manner. Children benefit from the relaxed atmosphere and homely environment. They relate their own experiences at circle time, building up strong relationships with staff and other children. Staff are on hand to support children in their play and actively take part. Children begin to distinguish between right and wrong as they learn to take turns and share when using the toys and equipment.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children make suitable progress towards the early learning goals. Their learning needs are understood by staff who have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage. Regular staff meetings are held to discuss the planning of the pre-school, which is displayed in the playroom folder. The key worker system is well established to ensure new children form a secure attachment with specific people. Activities are adapted in practice for the different age groups and abilities. Information about the pre-school children is obtained from parents on admission to the nursery. Children moving through the nursery from an early age have detailed record books completed showing clear starting points for the nursery education. However, when attending from a different setting they have limited information available and settling in observations are not completed. Observations and assessments are in the early stages of development. Staff working with the children are unsure of how to establish a system that would work best for them and in the best interest of the children. Planning is clear and supports children's learning. Individual learning needs are identified and next steps in children's learning are identified and used to inform the future planning. Staff extend children's learning and provide sufficient challenge in child-initiated play and small group activities. Children count confidently and can name a number of different colours. However, everyday activities and experiences are not used to help reinforce children's mathematical skills, such as calculating, comparing and problem solving.

Children are enthusiastic and eager to learn. They are self-motivated and self-assured in their play and confident to try out new experiences. They enjoy making the large model castle outside. However, their independence is not fully encouraged. Although staff encourage children to decide 'what goes where', they do not allow them free access to the sticking tape preferring to hand it out to them. Children use construction materials confidently to build three dimensional models and use a range of mark making materials to draw pictures and write their names in their writing book. Children develop their communication skills through the staff skilfully questioning them and reinforcing their language and vocabulary. They chat confidently with each other using a wide range of language and sentence construction, and their thinking skills are excellently promoted when listening to a story and at circle time. Children do not use the computer or help themselves to resources that support information and communication technology. These areas are not linked into the theme or for the planning for the week.

Children are well behaved and begin to show an understanding of right and wrong as they interact together in their play. Staff support children in their play. Children enjoy small group activities which help them learn how to share and take turns, and the staff skilfully encourage the children's understanding of respecting each other's needs. Children interact well with each other and listen to one another during quieter activities. They use their imagination as they confidently dress up in the dressing-up clothes and re-enact their own experiences. Children recognise colours as they look at books and they can count easily up to 10. They recognise the day of the week, date, month and season during activities. Children's development of large and small motor skills is sufficiently promoted through the physical activities provided. They

can find their personal space when asked to sit at the table at snack time and can negotiate their own space when playing with equipment outside in the play area.

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

The provision is good.

Children's understanding of equality is fully promoted through the numerous activities that encourage equal play. Children enjoy each other's company and play harmoniously together. They learn to take turns in circle time and share resources in small group activities. Children are familiar with the routine. They line up to go outdoors and walk sensibly up the stairs on their return. Children develop sound relationships with each other. They patiently sit in the quiet area waiting to do their 'hot gossip'. Children learn to value each other's contributions as they listen to each other and share experiences. The key worker system is used throughout the nursery. Therefore, children form appropriate relationships with the staff who are on hand to help, praise and constantly support the children. Children's individual care needs are known and met by staff in discussion with their parents. Children become aware of the wider society. They explore their own culture and festivals, and those of others. However, visual displays that help children understand about diversity and difference are limited throughout the nursery.

Children behave very well. The positive strategies staff use encourage children to explain their behaviour and acknowledge wrong doing. Staff listen to children, praise achievements and provide individual support and comfort when required. Children become aware of their own needs and the needs of others. They confidently help themselves to resources and show a willingness to help staff at tidy up time. Children make suitable choices and decisions about their play from the free play opportunities available to them. Staff support children's interests and change the activity following the requests of the children or in spontaneous play situations. Children's confidence and self-assurance are fully promoted by staff constantly praising achievement. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Children settle easily into the nursery, supported by the induction and transition arrangements established across all age groups. Parents and children are made very welcome. The nursery has a specific room allocated for parents which they can use for confidential discussions with staff or to sit and relax with a soft drink. Parents are extremely happy with the setting and the care and education their children receive. They praise the friendliness and expertise of all the staff working with their children. Children's activities and learning experiences are shared with parents verbally on collection. Younger children's parents receive written care sheets which are produced daily. Child progress records are completed by the key workers for most children, and scrapbooks of children's work are available. Children's individual care needs are discussed and recorded at registration, including any specific requests and requirements for individual children. On registering, parents are provided with information about the nursery and the care and activities provided. Information about the weekly activities and topics to be undertaken by children is regularly produced and available for parents. Healthy eating is firmly established within the nursery and encouraged at home by the provision of information leaflets such as 'Healthy Start'. Children's steady progress is welcomed by parents. The once established home nursery diaries are no longer used in the pre-school room and the opportunity to extend and reinforce children's learning potential at home is not promoted with these children. Information is available on a number of noticeboards within the nursery. The complaints procedure is displayed and the complaints log is established.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are well cared for by adults who have a clear sense of purpose and a commitment to continual improvement. The staff are experienced and most are qualified. All persons working at the nursery have undertaken appropriate suitability checks completed by the registered person. The robust recruitment and vetting procedures ensure children are well protected and cared for by staff with a good knowledge and understanding of child development. The induction procedure ensures that the nursery's policies and procedures are consistently applied and staff appraisals are completed on a regular basis. Individual training needs are recognised and continual training and development fully encouraged. Staff meetings are encouraged to make sure continuity is maintained, and information and curriculum planning are developed in the interest of the children. The 'Birth to three matters' framework is creatively displayed, recorded in planning and observed in practice. Staff use positive behaviour management techniques, which are consistently applied in practice. Members of staff work well together as a team and are very clear about their roles and responsibilities. The premises are well organised and indoor space is laid out to maximise play opportunities. It is effectively organised to maximise choice, independence and decision making and to encourage children to explore the environment. Children are provided with a good selection of natural materials to enable investigation and exploration. They access text labels and pictures to recognise where resources belong, and clear boxes contain natural heuristic play materials for younger children. Children relax in designated quiet areas, where they can rest or choose a book to read quietly with staff members. Well organised documentation ensures the efficient and safe management of the provision, and contributes to the health, safety and well-being of children.

Leadership and management of the nursery education provided for children is satisfactory. An all inclusive environment is encouraged and all children are included and treated with equal concern. Children make suitable progress towards the early learning goals from their learning experiences within the resourced, free choice areas and focussed activities. The manager has a strong commitment to development and improvement. This is shown in documents such as minutes of staff meetings and lead teacher and development worker reports. Planning is completed to meet children's interests through numerous themes, free play and focussed activities. These are in line with areas identified within the curriculum for the Foundation Stage to help develop children's areas of learning, and evaluation of activities shows individual children's next steps. However, the pre-school work is not monitored and evaluated by the management and therefore observations and record keeping are not as well established as for the younger children. Children's individual needs are recognised and they are well supported by staff. Their personal information is collected and recorded in registration documents. Initial assessments are not established for all children to help the planning process and contribute to their future development. Parents are provided with information about the provision. Information about how their child is progressing is welcomed.

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 Ofsted has received one complaint in relation to National Standard 1: Suitable person, regarding persons associated with the setting not being checked or not being suitable.

Inspectors visited the provision on 17 March 2008. Two actions were raised under National Standard 2: Organisation, regarding ensuring that there is a system for registering children's and staff's attendance on a daily basis, and under National Standard 6: Safety, regarding ensuring that positive steps are taken to promote safety within the setting and ensuring that proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents by making sure that children are supervised at all times.

Ofsted is satisfied that the provider has taken appropriate action to address the concern raised and that the provider remains qualified for registration.

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 satisfactory.

### **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):

- make sure younger children have opportunities during the day to access fresh air
- make sure that rooms are maintained at a comfortable temperature.

#### **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):

- encourage children's understanding of mathematics, such as calculating, comparing and problem solving, within everyday activities and routine
- encourage children's interest in information and communication technology and how things work
- encourage parents to become involved in their child's learning by re-establishing nursery to home links.

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)