



Puddleducks Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY303073
Inspection date	01 November 2005
Inspector	Susan Elizabeth Warren
Setting Address	Cannock Grange Day Centre, 105 Old Heath Road, Colchester, Essex, CO1 2EX
Telephone number	01462 896432 mobile 07947 898335
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Registered person	Puddleducks Child Care 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Puddleducks Day Nursery is one of three nurseries run by Puddleducks Daycare Ltd. It opened in 2005 and operates from three rooms in a converted and extended barn. It is situated in the town of Colchester, Essex.

A maximum of fifty children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 all year round. All children share access to a

secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently fifty seven children from birth to under five years on roll. Of these seventeen children receive funding for nursery education. Children come mainly from the local area and surroundings. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language

The nursery employs eleven staff. Six of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are encouraged to adopt habits which contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They wash their hands after using the toilet and after messy activities. Older children are independent whilst younger children are helped and encouraged by staff. Children know where to find a tissue or paper towel and where to dispose of it when used. If a child becomes ill, staff take appropriate measures to keep the child comfortable until a parent or named contact calls to collect them.

Babies and young children have their nappies changed as needed; staff follow appropriate hygiene procedures whilst changing nappies and used nappies are placed in a bin adjacent to the changer unit. Children in the process of potty training are supported and have their needs sympathetically managed by staff.

Children enjoy a balanced diet made up from a nourishing range of foods at snack times and meal times, for which menus made available to parents. They enjoy a home cooked lunch made from fresh ingredients. At teatime a lighter meal is offered. The food is adapted for babies at different stages. Children's dietary needs are understood and catered for, and all allergies are well documented so staff are aware of them. Children can ask for a drink of water at any time. Babies' milk feeds are sent from home. Utensils and equipment are sterilised as needed, keeping children safe and free from risk of infection.

Babies and young children rest or sleep according to their individual needs; staff keep a close eye on all sleeping children. They sleep either in cots or on low beds or floor mats; soothing music and dimmed lighting helps to set the scene and provides a calming atmosphere.

Babies have opportunities for physical play within their room, using a variety of safe equipment to crawl over and through, and rockers and a mini slide. Babies are taken outside to enjoy fresh air and free play with wheeled toys and balls. They go for walks in the grounds and local area when staff ratios permit, safely strapped into buggies. Babies are warmly wrapped and prepared for play outside as the weather becomes chilly.

All children use the outside area on a rota basis for fresh air and physical exercise.

They enjoy sweeping up the leaves before the toys are brought out. A climbing frame and slide has safety mats in place to protect against accidents. Children enjoy music and movement indoors with activity tapes and circle games.

Children needing medication are given the correct dosages, which are recorded and signed by a parent. Medicines are stored safely away from children's reach. Children are treated for minor injuries by first aid trained staff, accidents are recorded and signed.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a generally safe and secure environment. They are protected from harm by staff who monitor and manage the security system; no child can leave the premises unseen and visitors are screened on arrival. They are cared for in rooms of adequate size and have access to outdoor play, although the play area attached to the toddlers room is unusable for part of the year due to the decking surface which becomes slippery when wet.

Babies have sturdy cots and a combination of low and high chairs for feeding. Children have sufficient chairs and tables for their needs although some table tops in the pre-school room have become worn. Storage in the recently refurbished baby room is lacking and has the effect of limiting their choice of playthings as staff have to continually collect and return boxes from outside the room.

Most equipment is stored in well labelled boxes, however in the pre-school room children are not encouraged to make choices in selecting equipment since much is kept in boxes beyond children's reach so they cannot access it independently.

Children are taken through regular fire drills which are recorded. Fire safety procedures are not displayed in all rooms. Children are kept free from harm by staff's vigilance and attention to safety matters, a daily informal risk assessment is carried out to identify areas needing attention and maintenance matters are reported to the owners.

Children go on outings to the local park and other places of interest; ratios are maintained and an outings procedure followed to ensure their safety and welfare. Children are not taken in any vehicles.

Children's welfare is considered, and staff are vigilant, in terms of child protection issues. They report concerns to the designated child protection representative or, in her absence, the owner. Parents are made aware of the group's responsibilities as details are contained within the welcome pack.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children under three years follow a programme of activities based on guidance

contained in the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Staff have begun to receive training and are developing an understanding of the content which in turn is beginning to inform their practice in the care of the younger children. They take part in planned activities designed to help them progress and develop. Children enjoy warm and positive interactions with staff, who talk and sing to the children as they play with them, encouraging and helping them to use the toys and play materials. Babies enjoy exploring the natural and household materials as well as the manufactured toys. Toddlers enjoy frequent messy play with paint and other media, exploring and experiencing the materials under the guidance of enthusiastic staff.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate.

Some children fail to make sufficient progress because staff have an incomplete understanding of some aspects of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. As a result some of the activities lack sufficient challenge to help children make the best progress they can. Teaching methods are sometimes unimaginative and the planning does not contain sufficient detail to provide clear learning intentions or build on what children know and can do. Assessment records are inadequate: children's achievements are recorded by highlighting stepping stones, but little evidence of how they have achieved these stepping stones is kept and no indication for the next stages of learning is included. The assessment records are varied, with some children having few entries over a prolonged period. Staff are unclear as to children's individual learning needs.

Children's behaviour is generally good, they are resourceful in the light of lack of direction from staff at times, improvising their own games with equipment provided. They relate well to one another and are helpful and co-operative, gaining an understanding of sharing and taking turns. Time and resources are not always used effectively to support children's learning; staff are not prepared in advance of children's needs, consequently children are kept waiting as staff set out toys. Staff take time to prepare resources, for example cutting out components of a collage, resulting in less time spent working directly with the children.

Children have too little equipment to support their information technology skills development so this area of the Foundation Stage is insufficiently covered on a day to day basis. They have one tray suitable for either sand or water which limits the choice of play and learning opportunities. Some equipment is either shared, as with the role play, and therefore not available for children to use spontaneously or is limited as with information technology. This reduces children's choices and breadth of experiences so that all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum are not adequately provided for. Children's work is used to make wall displays such as 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' linked to the topic on healthy eating but there are no interactive or three dimensional displays to invite children to handle and experience materials or objects first hand, for example seasonal or natural items.

Children appear happy and settled at the nursery and have a good understanding of everyday routines, such as snack time and when to tidy up for lunch. They ask for help when needed, for example to reach a paper towel to dry their hands. The

development of independence and choice of activity is limited by the layout of the resources since most are in boxes which are out of children's safe reach. Children have to wait to be accompanied to use the role play area as it is away from the main playroom.

Children speak about real and imaginary events as they play and work, for example talking about going to the hairdressers and the doctors, and playing at schools with one child taking the role of teacher. They have opportunities to make marks and experiment freely with paint to see the effects of colour mixing and create pictures. Children help to make collages and images for a display about The Very Hungry Caterpillar, tied in to their topic on healthy eating. Children enjoy using books for pleasure, sharing favourite stories with one another. They learn how to treat books properly and usually handle them with care. They also enjoy stories as a group, responding enthusiastically.

Children have equipment to develop mathematical skills such as counting, matching and sorting and early calculation skills. Puzzles help them with shape and space and children are able to name common two-dimensional shapes. Children lack opportunities to develop problem solving skills and apply their mathematical learning in everyday situations as staff are unclear about what activities to provide to develop this aspect.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is developed as they learn about healthy eating and taste a variety of different foods, including some multicultural foods sampled when festivals, such as Chinese New Year, are celebrated. Children do not make progress in developing their information technology skills; no activities are planned and there is little equipment to develop their skills in information technology or uses of everyday technology. Children have limited opportunities to investigate and explore a range of made and natural materials or to discover how things work and why things happen as few planned activities are provided to deliver these experiences.

Children enjoy sessions of outdoor play and can use the area outside for riding wheeled toys, using the low climbing apparatus and small equipment such as balls. They are able to move to music and take part in circle games when unable to play outside. They move safely around the nursery and can line up and wait when asked, for example when queuing to wash their hands. Children use cutlery efficiently at lunch time and practise skills of pouring and filling as they play with the sand. Mark-making equipment is available and children are helped to hold a pencil correctly.

Children's creative development and expression is promoted by free painting. They use animals and vehicles to engage in small world play. Children have use of a shared role play area at set times, since it is away from the main playroom and needs supervision. They have some costumes and props to assist with role play, however some of the resource boxes contain few items of interest which means that children are not able to express their ideas or fully develop worthwhile creative and imaginative play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's needs are recorded on the registration form and their individual requirements are known to staff. Babies are cared for on an individual basis, sleeping and feeding according to their individual routines. All children are included in activities. Children see some images reflecting cultural diversity and celebrate a range of festivals both traditional and worldwide.

Children requiring additional support are helped to take a full part in activities and the premises are suitable for children with disabilities. Children's behaviour is good, they appear settled and happy at the nursery and respond well to instructions and guidance from staff. Babies are comforted and reassured if they are feeling a little unsettled. Any incidents are dealt with in a calm and controlled manner and a record kept.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory.

Children's details are kept on the registration forms and updated as needed. A welcome pack includes a prospectus, however, some of the information is out of date or incorrect. Parents are informed of events by occasional newsletters and notices pinned and displayed around the nursery. Children's days are recorded, and a copy given to all parents at the end of each day, showing what food children have eaten and their play and sleep patterns as appropriate.

Children's progress can be discussed with key staff at any time on an informal basis. Children's developmental records are in place; those for children under three are related to the 'Birth to three matters' framework whilst those of pre-school children are designed to show progress towards the early learning goals. At present the pre-school records do not give a complete picture of children's achievements or progress as they lack sufficient evidence or detail. This has the effect of limiting parents' involvement in the children's learning. Parents are involved in terms of contributing towards topic work by provision of recyclable resources to help children during activities.

Children's social, moral, cultural and spiritual development is fostered.

Children learn to respect the feelings of others and begin to see how people's beliefs and values are different across the world as they celebrate festivals such as Divali and Chinese New Year.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Overall the needs of the children are met.

Children are cared for by suitably qualified and experienced staff who have undergone the necessary vetting and checking procedures. Arrangements are in

place to ensure that unvetted staff do not have unsupervised access to children. Children have a key worker who liaises with parents and keeps records.

Procedures for recruitment, vetting and induction of new staff are in place but as yet there is no appraisal system to identify staff's professional development needs. Staff have in-house training, for example for first aid, which ensures that all staff maintain a current qualification. Staff report that staff meetings are held every term. Staff are generally clear about their roles and responsibilities and work co-operatively to care for the children.

The rooms are organised to care for children in age appropriate groupings with correct staff ratios observed. Recent improvements have provided a more spacious baby room which allows for flexible care and play space. Currently resources are stored in an upstairs space as there are no storage units in place; this entails a member of staff leaving the room to change the selection of toys and provide children with the variety of play opportunities they need.

Toddlers have a room which offers a hard floor for messy activities and a carpeted area which is used for floor play and, when children need to sleep, as a quiet room. An area between the pre-school room and the toddlers room is set up for role play with equipment and clothes for dressing up. Children have access to outdoor play; hard surfaces are used for riding wheeled toys and a low level climbing frame with safety mats in place. Another outdoor play area attached to the toddlers room has wooden decking underfoot which becomes slippery when wet so is not used at these times.

Paperwork and documentation is in place to support children's needs. This is stored in an office and a locked filing cabinet is available to ensure confidentiality. A daily register shows when children and staff are present. Accident and medication records are signed and dated.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is inadequate.

The manager is currently on leave and the deputy is acting as manager in her absence, with input and support from the owner who is based at another site for most of the time. The acting manager has limited understanding of some aspects of the Foundation Stage therefore short term planning is insufficiently detailed or precise enough to clearly show what children are expected to learn or to enable staff to have an idea of what they are expected to teach, as a result activities are not always appropriately challenging for children.

There has been some assessment made of areas for development, but the monitoring of the quality of the provision has been ineffective in rectifying those areas clearly in need of attention, for example identifying gaps in the provision in terms of resources and staff knowledge and understanding.

Poor organisation and preparation means that staff spend time in general management and preparation of resources whilst children are kept waiting and not meaningfully occupied. For example, after lunch when tables are cleared, children are kept waiting have whilst the single staff member consults a list to set out the

afternoon's activities.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report since 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.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that there is sufficient equipment, including toys and play materials, to support the needs of all children attending
- improve organisation to make full use of all parts of the premises, including outdoor space, to improve play and learning opportunities for children.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- ensure that staff have a sound understanding of all aspects of the Foundation Stage to enable them to plan and provide a range of activities that challenge children and extend their learning and make good use of the time and resources available
- review the assessment system to ensure that it clearly shows children's

progress and indicates the next steps in children's learning and can be shared with parents.

These actions are set out in a **notice of action to improve** and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk