



Polkadot Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY292440
Inspection date	20 February 2006
Inspector	Christine Lynn Williams
Setting Address	Greyswood, The Ridgeway, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, CV37 9JL
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Registered person	Polkadot Day Nurseries Ltd (5113868)
Type of inspection	Childcare
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

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Polkadot Day Nursery opened in August 2004. It operates from a converted single storey building on the outskirts of Stratford upon Avon, close to main routes. A maximum of 47 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to secure enclosed gardens and outdoor play areas.

There are currently 45 children aged from 3 months to 3 years on roll. Children come from the local community and the surrounding villages and rural area. Children attend for full day care and sessional care.

The nursery employs 14 staff, 9 of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications with 2 staff working towards appropriate qualifications. In addition the nursery also employs specialist co-ordinators for music, sports and Spanish.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's health is fully protected by the exceptional high levels of hygiene which are maintained within the nursery. Extensive cleaning routines are followed to reduce the possible risks of infection and staff take positive steps to ensure that all equipment, toys and areas used by children are spotless. For example daily, weekly and monthly cleaning routines are carefully followed, cot bars and mattresses are sterilised, floors are cleaned after all meals and even the tops of doors are regularly wiped clean. Current and appropriate hygiene guidelines are fully understood and staff all hold food hygiene and basic health and safety training certificates.

Children's individual hygiene needs are also extremely well provided for. They are given their own drinking cup, flannels, hand towels and toothbrush to use at the setting and are encouraged to wash their hands regularly and to brush their teeth after eating. Colourful signs, symbols and pictures help them to learn to understand simple good health and hygiene practices, such as always washing their hands after going to the toilet, and they become increasingly independent in their personal care through good facilities and very supportive staff. Individual creams and talc are provided for nappy changing and details of each baby's particular needs are recorded and displayed so that staff know exactly what to use on each child. Babies have their own bibs, feeding cups and bottles and these are sterilised immediately after use, while toys such as teething rings and rattles are cleaned overnight.

Children's nutritional needs are given a high priority, with a wholesome and balanced range of meals and snacks offered. All meals include protein for growth and essential minerals and vitamins are provided through raw foods such as salads and fruit. Children are given interesting home-cooked meals and there are additional arrangements for weaning babies which includes the use of some organic produce and raw foods so that they become confident in experimenting with differing tastes and varying textures. Processed food is not served and children are not given food and drinks with high levels of artificial additives or sugar. Menus are produced to give parents information about meal choices and there are excellent arrangements for meeting the needs of children with special diets or allergies.

There is an attractive dining room where toddlers and three year-olds sit together to eat and staff talk to children about what they like and why, and to promote good table manners. Babies and young children are encouraged to feed themselves and pictures of the children's favourite foods decorate the walls. Cooking activities give older children within the nursery the chance to experiment with different foods, talk about where these come from and what happens when different foods are mixed together. For example two and three year-olds talked excitedly when making cakes, discussing how icing sugar turned sticky when they added water.

Children get plenty of robust physical exercise. They use the outdoor facilities with gusto

and have good control over their bodies. They develop the confidence to make the most of activities such as rocking to music or meeting the challenge of using a climbing frame, slide or bike. There is also regular soft play and lots of games with balls, hoops and a parachute. Babies are taken outside for fresh air in the garden twice a day and older children benefit from lots of physical play and a specialist sports teacher.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children enjoy a colourful and stimulating atmosphere where indoor and outdoor space is organised effectively and they can learn, explore and develop safely and with close adult support. There is always a high ratio of well qualified adults to the number of children present, and staff are carefully deployed, ensuring children are always well supervised. Children use an extensive range of toys and equipment, including everyday household items, that are of good quality and safe. The nursery is very well resourced and equipped. Baby equipment carries British Standard safety marks and has been chosen specifically for its good design and safety aspects.

There are excellent systems for ensuring the safety of children at all times. The premises are checked daily and there is a detailed risk assessment, which is reviewed every six months and used extensively by staff to ensure all equipment, toys and resources are safe. Safety equipment is used according to the age and needs of the children attending and this includes socket covers, safety gates, padded radiator covers and safety flooring. Security has been well considered with extra precautions taken to ensure children are collected only by authorised people. This includes maintaining photographs of each child and their main carer, organising a password system with parents and gaining additional information such as the registration number of the family car or the name of a pet.

Children are well supervised at all times and learn to keep themselves safe through general discussion, topics and gentle reminders. For example, staff gently guide babies away from possible dangers, while older children are warned about running in the room and how to avoid catching their fingers in doorways. They know what to do if they need to evacuate the setting in an emergency and have discussed and practised the routine with staff. A specialist evacuation cot is used to ensure very young children are safe once they have been evacuated and fire equipment such as fire blankets, alarms and extinguishers are regularly checked to ensure they are in good working order.

Children's well-being is fully protected because staff have a very good understanding of how to protect children and recognise that this is their first priority. They are vigilant, aware of the signs and symptoms of possible abuse and know the appropriate procedures to follow should they have concerns about a child. A high number of staff have received specific child protection training and they have easy access to detailed policies and reference guides to help them implement correct

procedures when necessary.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are happy, settled and involved in a broad range of planned activities and spontaneous events, which support their development and overall learning. Good, warm and caring relationships between adults and children are evident. A key worker system is used effectively to gain information about young children's starting points, individual routines, needs and preferences and this provides a continuity of care that ensures children feel secure and nurtured. A high emphasis is placed on developing strong communication skills and this helps children to enjoy and achieve. Baby Sign is used extensively, helping even the youngest children to communicate more effectively. For example, all children were learning the signs for bus, car, sit and look as they enjoyed a wealth of stimulating activities connected to a traffic theme.

Babies are given plenty of space to move, roll, stretch and explore and music is used to sooth or stimulate them. For example, a specialist music teacher often sits and plays the cello in the baby room to calm and help them drop off to sleep. Crawling babies can develop their movement skills in a ball pool and they start to recognise things about themselves and discover what they look like in low level mirrors. Their senses are constantly stimulated by sound, soft lighting and playing with wonderful textures such as bubbles, wet cotton wool and baked beans. Baby's needs and preferences are carefully monitored and met and their comforters are always kept close by to help them feel emotionally secure.

Two and three year olds are encouraged to try out new skills, such as mixing chocolate, marshmallows and cornflakes together, or learning a new word in Spanish. They are involved in stimulating practical activities such as playing with wet spaghetti or acting out being someone different in the role play area. Staff work closely with the children, helping them to make connections with other experiences, and encouraging them to talk and listen. Extensive planning is in place which follows the 'Birth to Three Matters' framework. Each planned activity is linked with the skills and competencies in the framework, but is used flexibly, according to the mood, interests and personalities of the children attending on any particular day. As a result, children thoroughly enjoy themselves as they listen to stories, sing songs, play in the sand, paint and learn colours, shapes, number and letters.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children's individuality is valued and staff help children feel good about themselves by providing positive support, praise and close attention. For example, within the baby room staff give babies their full attention, making eye contact with them and responding to their smiles and the noises they make. The nursery's key worker system is used effectively to help children know they have someone caring for them who thinks they are special and detailed information is gained about children's

needs, starting points and personality.

Children learn to be proud of their own families through seeing lots of positive images of their own backgrounds and a diverse society. Photographs from home are used widely to help babies see pictures of themselves with their parents, while older children enjoy pointing to the photographs of their friends which are displayed on the wall. There are posters welcoming visitors in different languages and displays of the different words children are currently learning in Spanish. Positive role models are seen as the children play with toys, look at books and enjoy lots of creative activities linked to cultural festivals such as Chinese New Year, and they feel valued as they celebrate and talk about their own birthdays, achievements or the significant events in their lives. The nursery is strongly committed to inclusion and staff are conscientious about undertaking relevant training, working closely with parents and seeking advice from outside professionals. This ensures they keep up-to-date and plan ahead to support children who may have additional or special needs. All children are fully included and staff keep thorough records of each child's individual needs, all aspects of their progress and work closely with parents.

A trusting, friendly and professional relationship with parents contributes to children's well-being and helps ensure children settle quickly and feel secure. Parents are given a wealth of information about the setting through a variety of different methods including a prospectus, regular

newsletters, daily diaries, notice boards and displays of activity plans. Policies and procedures are clear and readily available and parents are regularly asked for their feedback and suggestions. Daily discussions with key workers, meetings and parents evenings provide opportunities for full discussion about their child's progress and there are also special evenings organised when parents can learn more about specific areas of the nursery. For example, an open evening was being organised for parents to learn more about the nursery's baby room and the 'Birth to Three Matters' framework. Staff keep parents informed daily and there are excellent systems in place to ensure there is a shared understanding of children's individual needs, likes and personalities between home and the nursery.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children's care is outstanding due to the high levels of commitment shown by the owners, managers and staff. They work closely together to focus on providing the best possible care for children, access regular training and work closely with outside professionals to ensure they are always up to date with current early years thinking and are aware of, and act upon, any new initiatives. A detailed evaluation of how well things are going lies at the heart of the nursery's commitment to improvement and views about its strengths and weaknesses are constantly sought from staff and parents. All staff are well qualified and the arrangements for ensuring there is on-going staff development are commendable. There is a rolling programme of training opportunities, staff are encouraged to make suggestions, try out new ideas for improving practice and are supported through appraisals, monitoring and

coaching. As a result, very high standards of care are maintained.

Extensive documentation, policies and records ensure children's health, safety and well-being are always carefully considered and the setting works extremely closely with parents to ensure children are well cared for. Overall the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to make improvements regarding using the key worker system more effectively to observe and assess children's development and progress.

Excellent progress has been made in improving both the effectiveness of the key worker system and the way children's assessments of learning are used. Both are now used to best effect ensuring children feel secure and nurtured by the close support and continuity of care they receive. Parents and staff work closely together, sharing information and helping children to feel safe, secure and well cared for.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

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