



## Play Box Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	253817
<b>Inspection date</b>	16 November 2005
<b>Inspector</b>	Permjit Tanda
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<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care, Out of School 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](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?

Playbox Nursery opened in 1998. It operates from five rooms in a single storey building on an industrial estate in Kingswinford. The nursery serves the local community and surrounding areas. A maximum of 55 children may attend the nursery at any one time.

There are currently 44 children on roll from birth to 5 years This includes 6 funded three-year olds and 5 funded four-year-olds. Children attend a variety of sessions.

There are currently no children with special educational needs, or with English as an additional language attending, however there is an effective system in place to offer appropriate support.

The nursery is open each weekday from 07:00 to 18:00 all year round. The provision also offers Out of School care for a maximum of 16 children. This includes a before and after school club during term time and a holiday play scheme from 07.00 to 18.00 during school holidays.

Twelve staff work directly with the children of whom all hold an appropriate early years qualification. The setting receives support from a local authority mentor.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because staff follow current and appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures. The good adult support and guidance helps children gain an understanding of hygiene and they become increasingly independent in their personal care. As part of the daily routine children learn about the importance of washing their hands prior to eating their meals.

Children explore, test and develop physical control in stimulating daily indoor and outdoor experiences. Children move confidently and safely with control and co-ordination whilst using the large fixed apparatus outdoors. They delight in the challenges of a versatile range of activities such as ropes to swing from, which they tackle enthusiastically. Younger children are confident to try out new skills, ask for help when needed and set their own limits within the safe environment. Staff promote the idea of physical exercise well. Older children develop a positive attitude towards physical exercise and learn to recognise the changes that happen to their bodies when they are active.

Children learn to negotiate space and avoid obstacles whilst playing in the indoor physical play area. Many children create their own games and challenges for example, children develop their hand and eye co-ordination whilst throwing balls in to an empty bin.

Children benefit from a healthy and nutritious meals and snacks. They freely access fresh drinking water and milk they enjoy fresh fruits and vegetables at snack time. Lunch meals are freshly prepared, well balanced and take account of the individual and cultural needs of all children. Older children learn about healthy foods through discussion and know carrots are good for their eyes.

Children are able to sleep and rest according to their needs throughout the day.

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

The provision is good.

Risks of accidental injury to children are minimised because staff are vigilant and use thorough risk assessments to reduce potential hazards. Staff have a good understanding of how to achieve a balance between freedom and setting safe limits, and how to involve children effectively in organising their environment. Therefore children can move safely and freely indoors. Outdoors children learn some sense of danger and knowledge about how to protect themselves from harm. For example, children competently use hammers and nails in a controlled environment. Children use good quality equipment appropriate to their age and stage of development. All resources and equipment are checked and monitored regularly for safety.

Children are protected by staff of who all have a good understanding of child protection policies and give good priority to children's welfare. All the required policies and procedures required for the safe management of the setting are in place and regularly updated.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

All children arrive happy and eager to participate. Those who are new to the nursery or room are helped to settle by staff that are sensitive towards their individual needs. Children make steady progress because staff recognise the uniqueness of each child. Close and caring relationships increase children's sense of trust and help them develop a strong sense of self. Babies under twelve months explore and discover through a planned creative activity daily such as, painting, printing, sticking and play dough. They have the freedom to engage and play with the many sound, shape and push button toys daily. Although have fewer opportunities to engage in imaginative and symbolic play for example, using dolls, tea-sets and other familiar objects to make sense of the world. They make contact with adults and gain their attention and staff build and support their early communication through good eye contact, the use of facial expressions and varied voice tones. They benefit from their individual room this allows them the freedom to explore and investigate safely. Staff are warm, caring and attentive to their needs. Therefore babies become self assured for example, they easily crawl around the room and pull themselves up confidently on fixtures and happily call for attention.

There is a strong focus throughout the nursery for children to develop a healthy independence and increase their self help skills. Children from one to two years benefit from a playroom which is organised with the needs of the children in mind. Therefore children can freely access a wide range of toys and resources which appeal to them. Sessions start well and children show satisfactory levels of involvement in their chosen play. Two children independently delight in shining torches at the wall and ceiling and investigate how they work. All activities are child initiated however staff do not always successfully engage children and build on their interest or learning. Therefore on occasions children flit and wander aimlessly which occasionally leads to boisterous behaviour. Staff have a developing knowledge of birth to three matters and some experiences lack purpose for example, children use the play dough but quickly become disinterested because the activity lacks

challenge.

Children from two to three years are cared for with the older three and four year olds. Younger children benefit from the same programme of activities as the older children and self-select from a wide range of meaningful activities throughout the day. Children are confident to try new experiences for example, younger children explore a tray of sugar using their senses. Because children have the freedom to choose what they want to do they learn to share, take turns and negotiate well. Children have a strong identity within the group and enjoy being with familiar and trusted others. They confidently move between the areas of the two rooms for example, choosing to play with the sand, water and then on to physical play. Mostly children show appropriate levels of involvement in their chosen play. Due to the mixed age group and ability of the children the learning and development needs are not always met fully.

### Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children show appropriate levels of concentration are interested by a varied range of stimulating activities. Children show an interest in what they do are self assured in their play and confident to try new experiences. They often make use of the craft table independently selecting paints, arts and crafts. Children have excellent opportunities to increase their self help skills during the session whilst helping themselves to fresh fruit, vegetables and drinks. Children are well behaved and have good relationships with staff and each other. The environment is well organised to meet the learning needs of the children but staff do not always encourage children to make good use of the resources available, for example there is an accessible writing area with various writing materials and trays with rice and sand to develop the children's early writing skills but children make little use of them throughout the session. Children learn to recognise their names through self registration and competently find their name cards at mealtimes. Older children learn to write their own names on their artwork but have few opportunities to link sounds to letters. Children are imaginative and creative they have daily opportunities to use a wide range of arts and craft materials to create their own work alongside more structured art activities for the purpose of the theme or wall displays. Children use their imagination through dance, music, design and role play. They make appropriate use of the space and props made available to support their play in the role play area. A group of children express and communicate their ideas well whilst using the puppet theatre during free-play.

Children gain confidence in counting during daily situations such as, counting cups at snack time and respond enthusiastically during number rhymes. Children begin to use mathematical vocabulary such as, big and small. They learn to use the computer and enjoy number and matching games. Children are exposed to numbers throughout their environment visually for example, in the home corner are written telephone numbers, the children's chairs have been numbered and there is a well resourced maths area displaying tape measures, weights, calculators and scales. However staff do not effectively encourage children to observe and manipulate what is available and therefore children show little interest in early mathematical ideas and methods to solve problems. The children's physical skills develop and improve through a variety of experiences, including dance and movement. Children handle

tools, objects and build and construct assembling and joining materials. Children show a keen interest in their natural environment and living things for example, children notice a spider outdoors and are encouraged to observe it through a magnifying glass. There are well planned opportunities for children to begin to use their senses for example they have been looking at the difference in textures of jam and shaving foam. Children have daily opportunities to freely access the sand and water and play at their own leisure but staff do not effectively build on the children's learning or encourage them to question why things happen and how they work.

There have been many recent changes including changes to the planning system and the addition of two years olds to the room. All staff do not have a secure knowledge of the foundation stage. A new system for planning activities has been introduced and staff are developing their knowledge of how to use it. Although staff focus on two areas of learning a term they also try to incorporate each area of learning weekly. However a balance is not achieved and therefore the children's learning is not adequately extended in some areas for example, knowledge and understanding of the world is not covered regularly. Staff plan an adult-led focused activity daily in which the children can take part if they wish. Children freely join and leave the activity as they desire this adversely has an impact on the quality of the learning experience. Most of the session is dedicated to child initiated play. Staff observe the children and spend some time interacting with them however; sometimes they fail to recognise the learning potential of activities and therefore the children's learning is not always extended fully. Staff do not always effectively plan for the mixed age and ability within the room hence story times are not always effective and activities do not always extend the more able children's learning. They use effective systems to observe, monitor and record children's achievements and are in the early stages of planning experiences that help children take the next step in their learning.

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

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed and play a full part in the nursery because staff value and respect their individuality. Their behaviour is good. Staff support younger children in sharing and turn taking. They have high expectations and set consistent boundaries for the children, which helps them learn to negotiate with others and take responsibility for their own behaviour. Staff increase children's understanding of right and wrong, they respond to gentle reminders to care for their environment, the nursery resources and each other.

The children have appropriate opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world around them through planned activities. Children have access to a variety of resources depicting positive images of diversity. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

A good partnership with parents contributes to the children's well-being in the nursery. Staff actively seek parent's views about their children's needs and interests before the child starts at the setting, and on a regular basis throughout their time there. Staff ensure that all parents know how their children are progressing and

developing. Children benefit from the involvement of their parents in projects, which contribute to their good health, safety, development and learning.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management of the setting are competent. They have a commitment to building on the good practice in care and a vision to improve the education for all children through staff training.

All legally required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place and is regularly reviewed.

Children benefit from a committed staff team who are effectively inducted and supervised. The good staffing levels allows staff to be deployed appropriately meeting the individual needs of children. There is a commitment from the whole staff team to continuous improvement and development. They regularly reflect, monitor and improve the quality of their care. Although staff receive support from the Local Authority to help improve the quality of education more effective monitoring and evaluating systems are not in place to regularly monitor the learning and teaching. The good quality of the provision means that the nursery meets the needs of the range of children who attend well.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the previous care and education inspection eight recommendations were made which the nursery agreed to implement. Seven of the recommendations have been successfully addressed.

The children's safety and welfare has improved. All staff have a clear understanding of child protection issues and the procedure to follow should an allegation be made against a member of staff. All parents sign a consent form for permission to seek emergency medical treatment and advice in an emergency. The children's self-esteem is promoted appropriately because staff have attended in house-training and increased their knowledge of behaviour management. They spend time observing children and rewarding them for their achievements through appropriate praise and encouragement. Parents are kept fully informed of incidents of behaviour through the consistent completion of an incident form. The structure of the day has changed it allows children to explore and learn independently through play. However staff do not always achieve a suitable balance between this and positive adult intervention. Therefore children do not always make good use of what is available.

Two of the three recommendations in relation to the education inspection have been fully implemented. The organisation of the room allows for children to freely access a good range of imaginative play resources. The home corner area is well resourced and children adopt roles easily and enjoy their play. Children have access to a satisfactory range of resources reflecting positive images and learn about diversity though using books, puzzles and dressing up.

The third recommendation has not been successfully met. The staff's knowledge and understanding of the foundation stage has not been adequately increased therefore all staff are not confident and do not effectively challenge and extend the children's learning.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection there has been one complaint. Concerns were raised about health and safety at the setting and staff not providing structured activities or adhering to parent's preferences. This relates to national standards. 6 safety, 7 health, 8 food and drink, 11 behaviour management and Standard 12 working in partnership with parents. An unannounced visit was carried out on 20 July 2004. As a result the provider was required to carry out the following actions; Ensure that daily attendance records accurately reflect the numbers of children and staff in each care base, to effectively demonstrate that ratios are met at all times. Implement effective procedures to promote health and safety within the setting to ensure proper precautions are taken to address any identified hazards and minimise risks. Identify an appropriately qualified member of staff to take responsibility for behaviour management and ensure that this information is shared with staff. Develop staff's knowledge and understanding of positive behaviour management to promote children's welfare and development. The provider responded to the actions request appropriately and monitored through the inspection process and remains qualified for registration.

## **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):

- ensure that activities, play opportunities and first hand experiences are used effectively to develop the children's learning in all areas
- increase the opportunities babies have to engage in symbolic play such as, dolls, tea sets and familiar everyday objects

#### **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):

- increase the staff's knowledge of the foundation stage to enable them to build their confidence and effectively challenge and extend the children's learning
- improve planning systems to incorporate all six areas of learning consistently and ensure staff clearly understand the learning intention of all activities provided
- introduce systems to monitor the effectiveness of learning and teaching.

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