



## **The Children's Place**

Inspection report for early years provision

**Unique Reference Number** 303834

**Inspection date** 23 February 2006

**Inspector** Ingrid Szczerban

**Setting Address** The Poplars, Free School Lane, Halifax, West Yorkshire, HX1 2YE

**Telephone number** 01422 395925

**E-mail**

**Registered person** The Childrens Place 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](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 satisfactory. 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?

The Children's Place Nursery opened in 1997. It is part of The Children's Place Nurseries Ltd which operates across West and North Yorkshire. The nursery operates from four playrooms in a large detached property, owned by Halifax Hospital Trust, on the outskirts of Halifax town centre, in West Yorkshire. The nursery serves parents employed by the Health Trust with some places open to the local community.

There are currently 66 children birth to 5 years on roll. This includes 15 funded 3-year-olds and 4 funded 4-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting does not currently support any children with special needs and no children who speak English as an additional language attend.

The nursery opens five days a week all year round. Sessions are from 07.00 until 18.00.

There are 15 members of staff who work with the children, eight of whom have a level 3 qualification in early years. There are three members of staff with a level 2 qualification and four who are working towards level 3. The setting receives support from an early years advisory teacher and the company's management group.

They have the Investors in People award and have achieved the National Day Nurseries Association Quality Counts Award.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is satisfactory.

The environment is clean and tidy and children receive support to develop good personal hygiene habits. Staff know and understand how to protect children from the spread of infection. Staff caring for babies wear gloves and wash their own and the children's hands after changing nappies. A clear sickness policy is effectively implemented to prevent the spread of any infections to children. Good arrangements are made and parental permissions are sought for administering required medication to children. In addition, staff receive specialist training for giving medicines when necessary. More than half the staff hold a current first aid certificate enabling appropriate care to be given to children in case of an emergency.

Children enjoy a range of activities which contribute to their good health. They have regular access to physical activities both indoors and outdoors, such as the use of bikes, slides, rockers and babies have a ball pool. Children are also taken on outings to local parks and playgrounds. Babies and young children sleep according to their individual needs so that they remain healthy.

Children benefit from nutritious meals that are prepared by the cook on the premises, mainly from scratch. The weekly menu is displayed for parents and they receive written information daily about what their child has had. Fresh drinking water is available at all times and older children can help themselves from a water cooler in their room. Staff gather all relevant information regarding individual dietary needs and work together with parents to ensure that children's needs are met. Staff caring for babies monitor food intake and nappy changes to ensure they remain healthy.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a warm, welcoming environment. Colourful displays of children's own art work and posters stimulate children's interest and give them a sense of pride and belonging. Children benefit from playing in a generally well-organised environment, which allows them to move around and play safely. The exception to this is the organisation of the room used by children aged two and a half to three years where the layout of furniture prevents them from always having sufficient space for large physical play. Babies and toddlers have sufficient space to crawl, stand, walk and run safely. The outdoor play space has recently been re-surfaced. A separate area for babies is provided and both are fully enclosed to keep children safe.

Many resources for children are stored at child height to foster independence but children in the pre-school do not have free access to creative materials such as junk items, collage, scissors and glue or sticky tape. Children use a range of good quality toys and resources appropriate to their age and stage of development. Sturdy prams and wooden cots are provided for babies to sleep in. Regular visual checks of toys and equipment ensure that there are no broken parts that could harm a child. Good risk assessments are effectively implemented by staff to ensure that children remain safe both inside and outdoors. Staff supervise children closely when playing outdoors and ensure all areas are safe before allowing children to go out and play. Children are learning how to keep themselves from harm because staff alert them gently to the potential consequences of their actions. For instance, children know that if they kneel instead of sit on their chair they might fall off and hurt themselves.

Staff have a good understanding of child protection issues. There is a clear policy and procedure to follow, which is shared with parents, in order to protect the welfare needs of children.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled in the child friendly environment where they have access to a suitable range of activities which enhances development in all areas. Routines are based around the children's needs and activities are planned to take into consideration children's interests, seasonal changes and current festivals. Children are currently looking at the topic of Spring and growing seeds.

Staff caring for children under 3 use the Birth to three matters framework well to develop activities to foster the development of this age group. The babies and toddlers have very good relationships with their designated key person and frequent playful interactions take place spontaneously. The care needs of babies are well met. Treasure baskets excite babies' interest very well as they eagerly explore the different textures of pine cones, netting and wooden pegs.

Toddlers are developing good social, creative and physical skills. They are fully engaged in selecting their own activities. Staff extend child-initiated play, for instance by enthusiastically reading books that children bring to them. This promotes their self-esteem, pre-literacy skills and fosters trusting relationships.

Children in the two and a half to three year old room are currently fascinated by watching the comings and goings on a building site next door. This interest is extended by staff to expand children's understanding of the world around them through discussions, playing with diggers and spades in the sand tray and displays of various heavy building equipment. This age group is developing some independence and can feed themselves well sitting at the table and select from activities that are set out for them. However, the positioning of furniture sometimes curtails space for large physical play indoors and the organisation of routines limits the extension of independence.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff in the pre-school room have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and of how children learn effectively. This enables appropriate challenges to be set for children to extend their learning. Effective questioning is used to enable children to think and respond in their own words, thereby consolidating learning. Staff have realistic expectations of the children and this impacts on their interest in the activities and on the good behaviour which was observed. The staff plan a suitable range of activities which take into consideration children's interests. However, children's individual records of achievement/ assessment are not used effectively to clearly identify the stage of development on admission of new children to inform future planning and plans do not always identify how aims for individual children are to be achieved. This results in the staff not being totally clear where new children are progressing or the plans for specific activities to improve individual children's learning.

Overall the children are making sound progress in all areas of learning. Children are happy and settled, interested in all activities and approach new experiences confidently. They are developing good levels of self-esteem, join in activities well, are making attachments to one another and are beginning to share and take turns. Children confidently take care of their own personal hygiene such as toileting and washing hands developing independence. However, they are limited in choosing activities they wish to do. They need to request creative materials if they wish to do something different other than the activities set out for them.

Children are confident speakers and are beginning to develop their writing skills as they attempt to write and spell out their names phonetically. They enjoy books and join in familiar stories as they are read aloud to. The comprehensive labelling in the room promotes good literacy skills so that children ascribe meaning to written words. Children show good interest in numbers. They count competently and are beginning to solve simple mathematical problems in everyday activities, such as how many children are present and therefore how many plates do we need for breakfast? They are developing an understanding of shape, as demonstrated when they find shapes in everyday objects, such as a plant pots and windows.

A strength of the setting is the progress children are making in their understanding of the world. They show good curiosity, explore their environment and look at the life cycles of seeds, plants and animals. They create by experimenting with technology as they build using construction sets and are learning how to use simple equipment on the computer. Children also gain an understanding of diversity in society, which

enables them to respect peoples similarities and differences. They look at different festivals from around the world such as Eid, Chinese new year and Easter and make displays of their work.

Children use colour, textures and shapes to creatively express themselves. They confidently take part in creative activities that are set out for them including drawing and imaginative play. However, children do not have free access to a variety of craft materials in order to express their creativity spontaneously. Children move freely with pleasure and confidence both indoors and outdoors, as they play on the bikes, crawl through a tunnel, throw balls and play on the slide, developing climbing, coordination and balancing skills.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's individual care needs are effectively met through a variety of means including information received from parents at the gradual induction of the child. Satisfactory arrangements are in place to ensure that children with special needs are provided with inclusive care. Resources positively represent the children who attend as well as individuals from the wider community. Festivals and foods from around the world are introduced to the children, which helps them learn to value their own and other's cultural traditions and develop a positive attitude towards others.

Staff have a good awareness of positive behaviour management techniques to enhance children's well-being. Children learn to share, take turns and learn about the consequences of their behaviour on others. Older children show genuine concern for younger ones. For example, by relinquishing their bikes to them when they become upset. Lots of praise and encouragement was observed to be offered to children, boosting confidence and self-esteem. Overall children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The quality of partnerships with parents and carers is satisfactory. There are effective systems in place to ensure information is shared on a regular basis about the child's progress and daily activities, through daily chats and written feedback sheets. For funded children, staff keep child assessment records, which are shared with parents on a regular basis. However, there is no system in place to do a baseline assessment of what new children can do before they start in the pre-school room. Parents are actively encouraged to extend learning at home; thereby promoting and enriching the child's development. Comprehensive information for parents is provided about the setting including a brochure, newsletters and a notice board which enhances the care and continuity for children. The nursery offer parents chance to express their views and share children's development records at forums and parents evenings.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

On the whole, space and deployment of staff are used appropriately to meet the

needs of the children. However, the layout of furniture in the room used by children aged two and a half to three years, curtails the amount of free space for large physical play. Children in the pre-school room do not have independent access to a variety of creative materials, which hinders their ability to be spontaneous and initiate their own play. Adult-child ratios are consistently maintained and staff are suitably qualified in early years. There are sufficiently rigorous recruitment and induction procedures in place to ensure that suitable staff are employed to care for children.

Leadership and management within the setting is satisfactory. Staff are supported well through a good appraisal system and on-going training is promoted. Further staff support is provided by an advisory teacher and a quality control person from the management team. This team review and evaluate the policies and practices continuously and have identified some of the setting's strengths and areas that need developing, such as training additional staff in the Foundation Stage. Satisfactory systems are in place for the monitoring of the nursery. However, these are not currently rigorous enough to assess the starting points for new children receiving nursery education. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection a recommendation was raised about domestic duties of staff impinging on time spent with children. Loading the dishwasher in the pre-school room, was previously done by staff there. It has been removed and additional part-time staff are now employed to help with this domestic duty thereby improving the amount of time staff spend with the children at meal times.

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

Concerns were raised with regard to National Standard 1 - Suitable Person. Ofsted visited the provision to discuss the concerns. 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.

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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):

- develop routines to foster children's increasing independence, especially at mealtimes
- review and develop the organisation of free space for children aged two and a half to three years for large physical play indoors.

### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

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

- develop children's assessment records, to include baseline assessments when new children are admitted; ensuring that the next stage in children's development is clearly identified and the development plans specify how the aims for individual children's learning are to be achieved
- organise a variety of creative materials to be independently accessible to the pre-school children.

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