



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN EY276157

DfES Number: 542251

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 13/09/2004
Inspector Name Susan Elizabeth Warren

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Puddleducks Day Nursery (Witham) Ltd
Setting Address The Rickstones School
Conrad Road
Witham
Essex
CM8 2SD

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Puddleducks Childcare Limited 3936029

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Puddleducks Childcare Limited
Address Butterfield House
Hitchin Street
Baldock
Hertfordshire
SG7 6AE

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

Puddleducks Day Nursery opened in 2001. It operates from a purpose built premises in Witham, Essex. The nursery serves the local area.

There are currently 77 children from birth to 5 years on roll. This includes 22 funded three year olds and 3 funded four year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children who have special needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery opens five days a week all year round. Sessions are from 07:30 until 18:30.

Nineteen staff work with the children. Over half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. Several staff are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) and is a member of The Essex Day Nurseries Association (EDNA).

How good is the Day Care?

Puddleducks Day Nursery provides good care for children.

The nursery is well organised with all supporting paperwork and documentation in place and to a high standard. The rooms are generally well laid out and resources are accessible to children. Some older babies' sleeping arrangements were seen to be inappropriate, the manager addressed this issue during the inspection and agreed to continue to monitor to ensure an appropriate quality of care. The nursery manager has a 'hands on' approach and spends time in each room every day.

The children are generally safe and well cared for. Risk assessments generally identify and deal with hazards effectively; the washing line in the garden, when not in use, is a potential hazard to children and the manager agreed to make it safe. Children have good home cooked meals and healthy snacks. Care for children with

special needs is good; outside help and advice is sought and acted upon when appropriate. Staff are aware of their responsibilities in regard to child protection.

Overall the nursery provides a worthwhile programme of activities to help children develop. Resources in the toddlers room were seen to be less well used to provide a wide choice of play opportunities; the manager addressed this issue during the course of the inspection and agreed to monitor in future. Children's behaviour is generally very good; staff deal with a range of behaviours in a sensitive and caring manner to help children understand what is expected of them.

The partnership with parents is effective. Parents are made welcome and staff are flexible and accommodating of parents' needs, working hours etc. Parents have informal opportunities to speak to staff and have information about activities and events via newsletters and notices around the nursery.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the nursery was asked to ensure that all hazardous cleaning products are made inaccessible to children; this has been done and now no child can access these items; they are kept locked away or on high shelves.

As a result of action taken children's safety and welfare are improved.

What is being done well?

- Documentation is all to a high standard and well organised to be easily accessible. The operational plan is well thought out, clear and easy to use and provides a useful working tool for staff and parents alike.
- All food and drink served is fresh and nutritious; children enjoy their meals which are served in a sociable and relaxed way. Morning snacks are largely fresh fruit and children have access to drinking water at all times.
- Staff manage children's behaviour well, using a variety of strategies to help children come to terms with their feelings and needs.
- Support for children with special needs is sensitive and appropriate; they have individual plans in place to enable them to be included in all activities and make all round progress.

What needs to be improved?

- one aspect of safety; the washing line
- monitoring of use of equipment (for babies' sleeping arrangements and for play in toddlers' room).

Outcome of the inspection

Good

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.

As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?

The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection

Std	Recommendation
5	Monitor the provision of equipment and resources to ensure that all children's needs are appropriately met (sleeping arrangements for babies, play in toddlers room).
6	Make sure that the washing line is inaccessible to the children when not in use.

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at Puddleducks Day Nursery is good. It enables children to make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development and creative development and generally good progress in all other areas.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and plan a stimulating range of activities. They use everyday routines and basic, core activities such as changing for P.E. as learning opportunities. At present the outdoor area is underused as a teaching resource. The planning system is well developed and easy to use, however, staff need more time to plan as a team to make the most of their skills and ensure that all are clear about what they are to do. Good support is in place for children with special needs and staff manage all children's behaviour appropriately. An assessment system, based on observations and evaluations, records children's progress towards the early learning goals and is used as the basis of discussions with parents.

Leadership and management is generally good. The nursery manager delegates responsibility to the room leaders but keeps an overview of practice through regular monitoring and appraisal. The commitment to training to help improve standards is dependent on staffing levels and these are sometimes stretched; a recruitment drive is underway to ensure staff have time for professional development and training.

The partnership with parents is very good. Staff are approachable and friendly, and they make themselves available for informal discussions at any time. More formal open sessions are also held. Parents are kept informed by a regular newsletter detailing topic plans and other items of interest. Parents are encouraged to contribute to the nursery in any way they can, including escorting children on visits or coming into sessions to help.

What is being done well?

- The planning is thorough and systematic, easy to use and understood by all staff. It ensures coverage of all areas of learning over a period.
- The nursery day is well planned with an emphasis on free-flow play. Children benefit by developing confidence and independence as they choose their own activities.
- The programme for creative development is very good. All aspects are given careful consideration to provide children with a range of stimulating activities to help them express their creativity and imagination.
- There is a calm and relaxed but purposeful atmosphere which encourages children to feel secure and make full use of the learning opportunities provided.

- The partnership with parents is very good and has a positive impact on children's learning. The home link book keeps parents very well informed of their child's progress, particularly in maths and language work.

What needs to be improved?

- use of the outside play area
- time for staff to plan together.

What has improved since the last inspection?

n/a

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children develop high levels of confidence and self esteem. They can talk about their work and concentrate well on self-chosen tasks, such as role play or a board game. Children understand the need to take turns and share; they are kind and thoughtful towards others. Children are largely independent yet ask for help when needed. They are usually co-operative at tidy up time. Children celebrate a variety of festivals both traditional and from around the world.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are confident speakers and effective listeners. They respond with feeling to stories and talk freely about home and family events. Children learn letter sounds and associate these with initial sounds of known words. They make use of books for pleasure and information, but the books are not presented in an appealing way to encourage correct book behaviour. Children write for a purpose and have 1:1 help with letter formation. Some resources such as pencils are in poor condition.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children use number names in everyday contexts and can recognise and order numbers to ten and beyond. Good use is made of equipment to introduce early calculation skills in a fun way. Ideas of measurement, weight etc are incorporated into role play i.e. using a tape measure, and sand and water play; children also cook regularly. Sequencing, matching, sorting and pattern feature in equipment and games, such as dominoes and the compare bears.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children explore living things, such as minibeasts, animals and flowers, as part of topic work. The outdoor area is underused as a resource for learning. They have opportunities to design and build using both kits and found materials. A computer is available but does not always work properly. Children talk about past and present events and enjoy visitors to the nursery to introduce ideas from the outside world. Children celebrate a variety of festivals and cultural events throughout the year.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children learn to follow a sequence and move over, under and along equipment with control. Outside they ride bikes and wheeled toys. They move confidently around the room and find a space, chair etc. Children follow basic hygiene routines such as handwashing and cleaning their teeth after meals. They develop hand eye co-ordination by dressing and undressing for P.E. and using toys and equipment with small parts. Tools for cooking, dough play etc help development of fine motor skills.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children explore colour and texture through free and guided art and craft activities, such as collage and painting. Music and dance activities are included in the topics and children respond to stories using instruments. They make up a dance sequence to perform. Role play is stimulating and offers the chance for sustained imaginative play with props such as builders' tools. Children's sensory development includes digging in the garden. They make careful observational drawings of flowers etc.

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

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- develop the use of the outdoor area as an 'outdoor classroom' so that all areas of the curriculum are represented in plans for activities outside. Increase children's access to the garden to encourage free flow play between the indoor and outdoor areas
- set up a system to ensure that staff have sufficient time, without children, to enable them to share in the tasks of planning and preparing activities and to attend training to update their skills and knowledge on a regular basis.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 - SAFETY

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 - HEALTH

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is

proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.