

# Playmates II

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number**

EY280880

**Inspection date**

12/10/2011

**Inspector**

Janet Fairhurst

**Setting address**

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**Type of setting**

Childcare - Non-Domestic

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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## Description of the setting

Playmates originally opened in 1993 with the new neighbourhood nursery Playmates II opening in 2004. It is operated by Playmates Private Day Nursery Limited. It is situated in the centre of Hartlepool and operates from two converted terraced houses. Playmates has three rooms spread over two floors and accommodates the under three's. Playmates II are separated from the original nursery by a shop and accommodates the three and over age group over two floors. All children have access to enclosed outdoor play areas and roof top gardens. Some of the play rooms are accessed via a flight of stairs. The nursery is open each weekday from 7.30am to 5.45pm all year round, apart from bank holidays.

The nursery is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 104 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 113 children on roll. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who have English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 23 staff who work directly with the children, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children make excellent progress in all aspects of their learning and development. A strong emphasis is placed on meeting individual needs and ensuring activities and experiences provided are both interesting and stimulating. Children's welfare is actively promoted through efficient organisation and effective safety arrangements. A clear commitment to working in partnership with others and the highly positive relationship with parents means that children benefit from a consistent approach and effective support. The nursery demonstrates a highly positive approach to continuous improvement, which is evident within their self-evaluation.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- enhancing risk assessments further by recording the actions taken to safeguard children when outings are undertaken.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Safeguarding is given a high priority which means that children's welfare is assured. All staff are confident in their understanding of child protection policies and procedures and are adept at identifying the signs and symptoms of abuse. High quality policies and procedures are in place to ensure that the correct action is taken to protect children if the need arises. Robust employment procedures are in place to ensure that those working with children are suitable to do so. A well-established appraisal system and clear commitment to personal development, means that staff are well qualified for their roles and ensures that knowledge and skills are kept up to date. Adults are vigilant at all times and implement effective strategies to keep children safe. For example, robust risk assessment is in place with clear arrangements to ensure that reviews are carried out regularly. Although, it is evident that the staff undertake thorough risk assessments for outings these are not recorded. Highly effective recording systems for medication administration, accidents and allergies, which are all meticulously kept and monitored, further ensures children are extremely well protected.

The setting is very inclusive with a strong emphasis on treating children as individuals. Staff know the children very well and they recognise, value and celebrate difference. As a consequence, all needs are met and children develop a very clear knowledge and understanding of the wider world. The staff work well together to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Effective procedures, such as gathering key words from parents and staff taking on the role of interpreter, ensure that children with English as an additional language are included at the setting.

The nursery demonstrates a strong commitment to working with parents and works extremely well with them so they are better able to support their children's learning. For example, parents make their own contribution to the children assessment records by recording their home observations, they also take home activity bags which encourage and promote learning at home. There are excellent systems in place to secure feedback from parents, including regular questionnaires, suggestion boxes and parents evenings. Parents are highly appreciative of the nursery's considerable strengths. Comments, such as 'she absolutely loves it there', 'a great environment' and 'staff keep us very well informed' are representative of the views of parents. A recurring theme is the approachability of the staff. Daily diaries, comfort books and discussions allow parents and staff to share information about children's experiences at home and nursery and parents have ready access to children's development files. The nursery has formed good working relationships with local schools, children's centre and other professionals involved in the care of the children, ensuring the efficient exchange of relevant information about individual children. Both the manager and her staff have high aspirations for the quality of the provision and take positive steps to evaluate their practice and improve outcomes for children. Dedicated to ongoing professional development, a number of staff are working towards higher level qualifications, ensuring the continued provision of a highly skilled team.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children**

Staff demonstrate a thorough understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and child development. This combined with the use of a highly effective key worker system, detailed observations and assessments and individual learning goals for each child ensures they are making excellent progress in all areas. Staff use their invaluable knowledge of each child to ensure that all activities are presented in such a way as to best suit individual needs and abilities. Starting points are clearly measured and ongoing achievements carefully assessed, so staff have a clear picture of children's overall progress.

Relationships between children and staff are excellent. They genuinely enjoy each other's company. This contributes extremely well to children becoming confident, settled and independent learners. Children are animated and enthusiastic as they make choices about their activities. They play happily with each other and staff, learning to take turns and respond to others as they participate in a rich range of activities. Babies and toddlers' emotional well-being is truly fostered as they play very contently, learning to enjoy being with others. Staff respond intuitively and sensitively to non-verbal communication, so that babies' needs are met effectively. Babies love to look at their reflection in the mirrors and enjoy a multitude of sensory experiences as they explore the contents of the treasure baskets. In addition, children have regular access to a sensory room, where they can relax and watch the bubble tubes and the different coloured lights that move around the room. Staff are extremely sensitive to babies' early attempts at communication, holding them close, ensuring plenty of eye contact whilst talking happily to them, reinforcing their responses with praise and repetition.

Well-resourced role play areas combined with exciting children's den, helps support children's adventures into imaginary worlds. The theme of the den is changed on a regular basis. Currently, the toddlers have a pirate ship which has generated discussions and creative activities. Children listen attentively to a pirate story whilst being transfixed by the glove puppet, the staff use as a prop. High priority is given to ensuring children take part in a range of activities to stimulate and promote sensory development. Older children enjoy mixing paints, using brushes or their fingers to make pictures and models to take home or display in their room, whilst the younger children enjoy gloop and jelly play. Staff make excellent use of the outdoor space. The roof top play areas are a prime example of this. Children also benefit from the outdoor play facilities at the local school and children centre which enables them to participate in more adventurous and energetic play. Babies and toddlers have daily walks in their buggies embracing the fresh air, sights and smells of their surrounding.

All staff apply clear and consistent boundaries, so that children develop knowledge of what is expected and display positive behaviour. The nursery has recently gained the Hartlepool Early Years Eating Award for recognition of promoting healthier eating and lifestyle of all children. This is clearly demonstrated in the meals which are thoroughly enjoyed by all and by the sale of healthy low cost fruit, vegetables and salad packs. Children know to wash their hands before eating and

after visiting the toilet and do this independently, with younger children receiving support from the staff. Children are actively encouraged to take responsibility of their own safety. For example, they take part in emergency evacuation and during their outings, staff take the opportunity to develop children's awareness of road safety. They are reminded to walk indoors and staff explain safe practices, such as why children should pick items dropped on the floor, so that others do not fall over them. Children's learning about personal safety is further enhanced as the fire officer and local police officer visit to talk to them about how to stay safe while outside and at home.

## Annex A: record of inspection judgements

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*  
*Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*  
*Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*  
*Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

### The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b> | 1 |
| The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement                                     | 1 |

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>            | 1 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement         | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources   | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity                             | 1 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding  | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement | 1 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships  | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers                                | 1 |

### The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

|  |   |
|--|---|
| The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 1 |
|--|---|

### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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|--|---|
| <b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b> | 1 |
| The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning    | 1 |
| The extent to which children feel safe                           | 1 |
| The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles            | 1 |
| The extent to which children make a positive contribution        | 1 |
| The extent to which children develop skills for the future       | 1 |

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## **Annex B: the Childcare Register**

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| The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: | Met |
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|--|-----|
| The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: | Met |
|--|-----|