

Playmates Playgroup (Raunds)

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	220279
Inspection date	12/10/2005
Inspector	Coral Hales
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Registered person	Playmates Playgroup
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care

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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 provider must give a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must give a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Day Care and Childminding (inspection) (England) Regulations 2005 No 2300 Regulations 5 and 6).

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 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?

Playmates Playgroup is a committee run community group with charitable status, which opened in 1991 and moved to its current premises in January 2001. The playgroup is based in the former caretaker's house in the grounds of the local primary school in the small market town of Raunds.

A maximum of 21 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday from 09:10 to 11:40 during school term time. The children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area and also use the school playground.

There are currently 25 children aged from 2 years to under 5 years on roll. Of these 21 receive funding for nursery education. Children may attend from the age of 2 years 9 months. They attend for a variety of sessions and come from the local surrounding areas. The group offers good support to children with special educational needs and to children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs six part-time staff. Four of the staff, including the group leader hold appropriate early years qualifications. Two staff are working towards a qualification.

The setting receives support from the local authority and the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for well in a clean, welcoming environment, where they learn the importance of simple good health and hygiene practices through daily routines. Children develop good self-care skills as they visit the toilet. They understand, for example, why they need to wash hands after using the toilet to remove germs, and why they have to wash their hands before eating. Children's health is promoted successfully because staff maintain effective procedures.

Children are well nourished. They enjoy the snacks offered by the staff that are healthy and nutritious. They choose when to have snack and select from a choice of different fruits and enjoyed apples and raisins during the inspection. Drinks are freely available. The staff have a good awareness of special dietary requirements, therefore children's individual needs are met well according to the wishes of the parents. Children can rest or play according to their needs. A qualified first aider is on duty during all sessions in the event of any accident and appropriate procedures are in place if children are unwell.

Children have regular opportunities to be out in the fresh air and go out on walks around the locality and on trips to places of interest, for example the local farm park. Children enjoy a balanced range of physical activities indoors and outdoors. They take part in planned activities, such as visits to the school playground where they run, play games and use a good selection of wheeled toys. This enables the children to develop new skills and increase their levels of coordination and control of their bodies. Children begin to understand how exercise helps them to stay healthy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a provision where risks are identified and minimised and risk assessments are completed to reduce potential hazards to ensure children's safety is maintained. The premises are secure and children are unable to leave them unsupervised, this enables them to move freely between the rooms and to develop their play and ideas in a safe and secure environment. Children are well supervised at all times as staff are effectively deployed throughout the playgroup and high adult to child ratios are in place.

Children use good quality equipment appropriate to their age and stage of development. Those with special needs and those learning English as an additional language are safe and fully included because of the sensitive and effective adult support. Sharing of information with the parents further contributes to children's safety. Staff have a working knowledge of child protection issues and understand their responsibilities for the welfare of the children in their care. However, they are not fully secure in their understanding of the local Area Child Protection Committee Procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are confident and happy during the time they spend at the setting. They are keen to participate in all activities and select tasks independently and staff offer appropriate support to develop children's learning. Warm relationships between the children and the staff contribute to the children's sense of belonging. New children are allowed the time to settle in at their own pace and are given good support by the staff. They are given opportunities to play independently and with their peers, as a result they are forming a positive attitude to learning and enjoy the play experiences offered.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with some good aspects. Children's personal and social skills and their self-esteem develops well as they play. Most staff have a working knowledge of the Foundation Stage and the early learning goals, however this knowledge is not secure enough to enable them to offer a variety of challenging activities to extend learning for the more able child. Staff use a variety of effective teaching methods to interest and stimulate children. Planning is

satisfactory and is generally effective in most areas and all staff have opportunities to contribute their ideas. Not enough emphasis is given to some areas of communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and mathematical development. New systems are in use to observe, monitor and record children's achievements and to plan experiences that help children take the next steps in their learning. These are working effectively and are shared with parents.

Children speak confidently to each other and adults as they play, although they do not always have the opportunity to talk in a large group situation. Children are beginning to understand the written word through the use of posters, books and name cards. They attempt to write and make marks and some children form recognisable letters. They listen to stories as a group, but do not often look at books by choice. Children participate in rhymes and songs and talk about letters, and recognise some or all of the letters in their names. Children use numbers in their play, however their understanding of numbers is not reinforced during routine practical daily activities. They develop their understanding of simple addition and subtraction and use words such as 'more than' and 'less than' as they play with dough and water and learn how to sequence using simple equipment, or when learning about growth. Children construct using a range of construction kits and recycled materials and show developing control and skill. They use simple working technology well and show understanding as they use the computer. Children visit the local environment and investigate real, man-made and natural objects. They discover and identify features of living things as they go out on visits to the local farm park or to the village. They begin to understand about the wider world but have limited opportunities to develop this learning. Children handle tools well during activities as they use scissors to cut paper and materials and glue sticks as they create pictures. They cut, mould, thread and use small equipment confidently as they develop their small hand skills. Children create models and displays using recycled materials in two and three dimension and talk about what they are making and how they want the finished result to be. They use their developing imaginative skills well as they become, princesses, pirates, soldiers and policeman. Children develop their senses well as they taste fruit, play in a variety of mediums, listen to music and make observations as they walk around the community. Children are encouraged to develop new physical skills and they move in lots of different ways during indoor and outdoor activities and have positive attitudes to exercise.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed and play a full part in the group because staff value and respect their individuality. Children with special needs integrate well because very effective procedures are in place to support and promote their learning. Children are valued and staff help them to feel good about themselves by frequently providing positive support, praise and encouragement: this helps build children's self-esteem. Good levels of staff enables children with special needs and those who speak English as an additional language to gain the most benefit from being part of a group.

Children behave well and staff effectively support the children to encourage them to share and take turns. Staff have set consistent boundaries for the children which enable the children to negotiate with others and begin to take responsibility for their own behaviour. They are effectively learning about the local community, however their knowledge of the wider world is not always well promoted. Children show an understanding of others needs and this is effectively reinforced by the staff. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

The partnership with parents and carers is good and this makes a positive contribution to children's learning and progress. Staff provide parents with regular information about their child's progress. Useful suggestions or information for parents is displayed on a large board in front of the main entrance. A range of information is provided about the Foundation Stage and the early learning goals. Children benefit greatly from the involvement of their parents in projects and group outings, and this contributes positively to their learning. Parents speak very highly about the playgroup, the staff and the good progress their child is making.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled, high adult to child ratios ensure that children are cared for and supported during their time at the group. Children benefit from the effective organisation of the space and resources and these enable them to make choices. Indoor space is laid out to maximise the play opportunities for children, for example one room is used for messy play, another for general play and another as a quiet more relaxing room. Staff have a generally good understanding of the national standards in most areas. However since the last inspection a new manager has been appointed and required paperwork has not been completed.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff work well together towards common goals. They are committed to improving the provision and their own professional development. Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and are committed to the care and education of the children. Clear channels of communication are in place between the staff and this helps to ensure the smooth running of the playgroup. Staff training needs are highlighted during reviews and appraisals and acted upon. Most required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and welfare is in place. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides care and nursery education.

Improvements since the last inspection

Staff have begun to address the recommendations given at the last inspection. They have attended additional training to update their knowledge of special educational needs and a special needs co-ordinator has been appointed. The induction system is used appropriately, however it is currently being reviewed and will be updated in line with current guidelines. These new systems allow the staff to become more effective

in their roles to maintain children's health and welfare. Staff have a working knowledge of child protection issues however they are not secure in their knowledge of local guidelines and this will be carried forward as a recommendation from this inspection.

Staff were asked to develop their planning to ensure that children had opportunities to learn about and use simple working technology and develop an understanding of cultures from around the world. Children now use the computer and other equipment with confidence and developing skill and their learning is well supported. Children's learning about other cultures is not always well promoted and this will form part of a recommendation. Staff have reviewed and developed their policies to ensure all required documents are in place and these and the new assessment systems are effectively shared with parents on a regular basis.

Complaints about the childcare provision

There are no complaints to report.

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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):

- increase staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection issues
- adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so. Ensure effective procedures are in place for staff appointments and that checks are carried out on their suitability, qualifications and experience

The quality and standards of nursery education

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

- improve staff's knowledge of the Foundation Stage to ensure they cover all areas of learning with particular reference to: promoting children's understanding of diversity, developing their interest in books and allowing them to take part in regular practical mathematical activities. Ensure activities are appropriately extended as required to stimulate and challenge the more able children.

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