

Playmates Pre-School

The Log Cabin, Whitelands Park Cp School, Sagedcroft Road, Thatcham, RG18 3FH

Inspection date	01/12/2014
Previous inspection date	22/03/2010

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Staff work very well as a team and have a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements, enabling them to deliver fun learning experiences.
- Children develop good independence, self-esteem and self-confidence as they receive continuous praise and encouragement. They form secure, emotional attachments because of the sensitive and skilful support of staff.
- Staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities and the procedures for protecting children, and regularly refresh their safeguarding knowledge.
- Staff effectively support children in building secure relationships with those around them. They successfully help children to understand the importance of safety through their own behaviours.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Staff do not always organise group activities to allow older children's enough time or encouragement to present their ideas to others.
- Staff provide limited opportunities for children to explore and learn about mathematics through their free play and investigation.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the main room and in the pre-school garden.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of staff working with children.
- The inspector sampled children's learning journeys, planning documentation and a selection of policies and children's records.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to during the inspection.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager and the chairperson of the committee, and spoke with staff at appropriate times throughout the inspection.

Inspector

Anneliese Fox-Jones

Full report

Information about the setting

Playmate Pre-School registered in 2009 and has been established since 1979. It operates from a log cabin within the school grounds of Whitelands Park School, in Thatcham, Berkshire. Children are cared for in the cabin with an additional conservatory area. There is a kitchen, toilet facilities and an enclosed outside play area. The pre-school is open five days a week from 9am to 3pm from Monday to Thursday and 9am to 12pm on a Friday, during term time only. The pre-school receives funding for the provision of free early education to children aged two, three and four. The pre-school supports children who are learning English as an additional language. There are currently 56 children on roll in the early years age range. The pre-school is run by a committee, which is elected annually and employs seven staff members to work with the children. Of these, five staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. In addition the pre-school manager holds a level qualification at level 6. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- increase opportunities for older children to share their thoughts and express ideas, particularly during planned group times
- enhance opportunities for children to freely access resources that support learning about mathematics during their own exploration and play.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Staff are knowledgeable about how children learn and develop. This enables them to provide a range of interesting activities that meet the needs of all children. Overall, the quality of teaching is good, with staff interacting effectively with children in a warm, caring, and timely way. Staff make regular, meaningful and significant observations of the children's learning. They regularly monitor all learning profiles to ensure children are making good progress and are gaining the skills they need for their next stage in their learning, including starting school. Staff work well with parents in order to support their children's development. They achieve this through daily discussions and by giving parents regular opportunities to view their children's learning profiles. Parents receive invitations to attend termly meetings where they discuss possible lines of development for their children with their child's key person.

Children progress well in their communication and language skills. They listen to staff and generally respond with enjoyment in small group story gatherings. However, at times staff do not plan for older children to be fully involved and challenged during planned group times. For example, joining in with discussions and topics, expressing their ideas and feelings. Nonetheless, staff use language associated with activities to broaden children's understanding and develop their speech. They engage children and encourage their conversational skills well.

Children have many opportunities to see written words in their surroundings. Children independently find their name to self-register when they arrive at the pre-school, which means they are able to recognise their written names. They have lots of opportunities to practise their early writing skills using different materials. Some of the older children demonstrate good progress in this skill by attempting to write their own names. Children look at good quality books and find the illustrations especially interesting. Staff place good emphasis on promoting children's personal development and, as a result, children are becoming confident learners. Staff give good attention to ensuring that children have opportunities to develop physically. For example, they encourage them to be physically active when playing outside and indoors. Children have regular opportunities to dig, negotiate wheeled toys, practise balancing and generally develop their coordination.

Mathematical concepts are explored in many different ways throughout the pre-school. Staff use mathematical language around children. Children practise counting the number of dots on a spotty dog game and construct tall towers with magnetic shapes. There are planned activities to support children's mathematical development including their understanding of shape, space and measurement. For example, children enjoyed an activity to fill and empty pretend snow into differing sized containers. However, opportunities for children to explore mathematics in their freely chosen play are limited. This is because there are few resources available for them to explore independently. Children have access to, and freely use, a wide range of media and materials. For example, they enjoy using paint and pens on paper and use chalks to draw around each other's outlines on the ground outside. In addition, children were observed having fun rolling, cutting and pressing pipe cleaners into play dough. Staff understand that these types of activities support children's creativity as well as promoting their early writing abilities. Staff also plan opportunities for children to become familiar with modern technology, such as using mini computers and programmable toys.

Staff work well with parents to share information about children's achievements in the pre-school and at home. Staff are keen to support parents by providing appropriate advice and invite them to meetings to discuss their child's developmental progress throughout the year. In addition, the required progress checks for children aged two years provide parents with accurate information about their children's development. Staff inform parents of the next steps planned to further promote their children's learning and help them to understand how to support their child's learning at home. There are notice boards and frequent newsletters to provide more general information about activities and events in the pre-school. Parents are very happy with the service they receive and praise staff for being approachable and kind.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Children are happy and settle quickly. This is facilitated through an effective key-person system. Key persons and parents work together to support children as they settle in to the pre-school. Staff treat children with care and pay attention to promoting their emotional well-being. They model positive behaviour, including manners and politeness towards others. Staff show children how to be kind and help them learn the skills to contribute towards social situations. Children build an awareness of themselves as individuals and enjoy the company of others. They learn the skills involved in resolving conflict, sharing resources and taking turns. Staff deploy themselves well enabling them to provide continuous supervision of children. This contributes to their overall safety and welfare. Staff are calm, patient and consistent in their expectations with regard to behaviour. They give children purposeful explanations about why it is important to share and take turns. Children treat their environment with respect, learning to tidy up as part of the team. They learn about the wider world through various festivals and celebrations. This extends their understanding of different cultures and traditions.

The environment is welcoming and resources are plentiful to support successful learning inside and outdoors. Resources successfully reflect the diverse community that make use of the pre-school. Low-level, labelled storage helps children make choices in their play. Furniture and equipment are appropriate and meet the needs of the age range of the children using them. Staff have a good understanding of the importance of ensuring children are emotionally secure. They work in partnership with parents to support children to build good levels of trust with adults and other children. Children are confident and independent in their learning, with good social skills and their ability to care for themselves. This prepares them well to move from the pre-school towards future learning experiences at school.

Staff promote children's understanding of healthy lifestyles well. Their good modelling and high expectations encourage children to develop independence and self-care skills. As a result, children act with self-assurance as they carry out tasks for themselves. Children develop a secure understanding of good hygiene, learning early the importance of hand washing and disposing of used tissues. All children are encouraged to make simple choices about what they want to eat. They engage in tasks such as pouring their own drinks and putting away their dirty cups and bowls. Children initiate their own play outside and practise skills such as climbing and balancing on mini step ladders, tyres or balance beams. Children are energetic while playing outside because the environment is exciting and staff plan well to encourage them to be more physically active.

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

The manager fully understands her responsibility to safeguard children and is able to identify the potential signs and symptoms of abuse. She knows what actions to take should concerns arise about a child's welfare and effectively shares this information with the whole staff team. As a result, all staff display a good understanding of the

safeguarding requirements. There are robust procedures for the safe recruitment of staff, which further helps to protect children. The pre-school has a detailed written safeguarding policy, which includes information about the safe use of mobile telephones and cameras. The manager is committed and passionate about providing children with the very best early years experience. She has a very good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. She seeks to ensure that children are engaged in meaningful activities that further their learning and development. The manager monitors the educational programmes well. She conducts regular checks of children's learning records. This ensures they are up to date and are being effectively used to assess children's progress and accurately identify their next steps in learning. Furthermore, the manager collates this information in order to monitor specific groups of children to identify any emerging gaps in learning.

The detailed self-evaluation plan identifies areas for development and helps to promote continuous improvement of the provision. Staff receive regular opportunities to access training courses. As part of the pre-school's commitment to continuous professional development, staff are expected to share their learning experiences with their colleagues. The manager is continuing to develop systems for monitoring staff practice, to help identify any inconsistencies or areas for development. She uses this information to inform training plans for each member of staff. The manager seeks the opinions of the staff, visiting professionals, parents and children as part of self-evaluation process. The pre-school has met all previously set recommendations for improvement, helping to promote good outcomes for children.

Staff maintain appropriate documentation to record details of accidents, incidents and the administering of medication. Staff use an effective process of daily risk assessment to identify potential hazards and take action to minimise these quickly. Positive relationships with parents means there are good channels of communication. This enables staff to be aware of children's individual needs and family circumstances at all times. As a result, children's welfare is actively promoted. The manager is a strong role model who is firmly dedicated to providing good quality provision for all children. The manager and staff have a wealth of childcare experience, are appropriately qualified and work cohesively as a team. Additionally, staff work closely with parents, the local authority, teachers and other childcare professionals, such as speech and language therapists. This allows early intervention for children who may need additional support, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected again within six months of the date of this inspection.
Met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY395935
Local authority	West Berkshire (Newbury)
Inspection number	830690
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	2 - 5
Total number of places	28
Number of children on roll	56
Name of provider	Playmates Pre-School Committee
Date of previous inspection	22/03/2010
Telephone number	07770 518857

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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