

Peapod Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY223201
Inspection date	16 October 2007
Inspector	Alison Putnar
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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.

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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Peapod Day Nursery opened in 2002. It operates from three rooms and associated facilities in purpose built premises situated on the A606 Melton Mowbray to Nottingham road on the outskirts of Melton Mowbray in Leicestershire. A maximum of 29 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery opens each weekday from 07:30 to 18:00. Children in the pre-school and toddler room share access to a secure outdoor play area. A separate secure outdoor area is provided for babies.

There are currently 38 children from six weeks to five years on roll. Of these, 14 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from surrounding villages. There are no children currently attending who have learning difficulties or disabilities. All of the children speak English as their first language. The nursery employs eight childcare staff. Of these, five staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications and two staff are working towards a qualification. A cook is also employed.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy in the setting as practitioners follow stringent cleaning routines. Guidance is displayed around the nursery for staff to ensure they follow good practices when changing nappies and preparing feeds. Rotas are in place to ensure that toys are cleaned as required. The majority are kept in a clean and hygienic state. The playrooms and importantly carpets in the baby room are clean. Children learn about the importance of good hygiene routines themselves. Young children are supported to wipe their hands before they have finger foods and older children show an awareness of good routines as they share 'we use soap to get rid of germs'. The risk of spreading infections is minimised further as children use individual face cloths and bedding. An exclusion of sick children policy is shared appropriately with parents. Notices are displayed detailing any illness in the nursery to enable parents to look out for potential symptoms. Children are well cared for in the event of minor accidents. An adequate number of staff hold appropriate first aid certificates. Equipment to deal with accidents is accessible and records of accidents are logged and shared with parents, promoting continuity in children's care. Documents evidence that accidents are minimal and are generally linked to children's stages of development as they begin to become more mobile, showing that staff are vigilant in monitoring children's safety and welfare. Secure practices are followed in the event of medication being administered, again supporting children's health and safety.

Staff work well with parents to ensure children's dietary needs are catered for. Good communication exists between the cook and childcare practitioners to ensure foods are provided that meet children's needs in terms of dietary requirements and development. For example, foods are blended and finger foods provided for the younger children as required. Occasionally, the range of foods provided at tea time are less appropriate in terms of nutritional content for the babies. Home cooked meals are provided which are nutritionally balanced on the whole. Fresh fruit and vegetables are included in meals and sometimes given at snack time to encourage children to make healthy choices. Children are very well supported to develop important social skills at meal times. Staff sit with children at the table to support table manners and to engage in worthwhile conversations. Children are extremely polite. Children benefit from access to fresh air as the daily routines ensure the majority go outdoors at least once a day. Older children experience a range of resources to promote physical development. They use slides for climbing, wheeled toys for spatial awareness and coordination skills, and balls and bean bags to practise catching skills. Plans for physical activities in the pre-school do not always show how children are building on the skills they have rather than just repeating them.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Staff work extremely hard to create a welcoming atmosphere where children thrive in the safe, secure and comfortable environment. All visitors and users of the nursery are individually greeted, promoting safety. The premises are secure and records of visitors maintained as appropriate. A child-friendly environment and atmosphere is evident. The majority of displays are children's own work, which portrays the strong ethos that children are valued. Playrooms are attractively maintained and organised well to offer comfortable areas. Equipment is of high quality and in ample supply to meet the individual needs of the children. All children eat in small family groups and access toys and activities presented attractively on carpets and tables. Toys are stored accessibly to enable staff to provide variety in play without having to leave the

room to fetch other resources. Older children's independence is supported well as some resources are stored in units they can freely access, enabling them to choose and reach toys and equipment to extend their play and learning. Young children benefit from the effective use of domestic style furniture in the baby room. Here very young ones are fed comfortably in staff's arms and develop their physical skills of standing and walking as they pull up safely using the sturdy chairs. The physical environment is well organised to promote children's well-being. Toilet and nappy changing facilities are situated adjacent to playrooms; again this ensures that staff spend minimal time out of the play rooms. As a result, children are very well supervised to ensure the risk of accidents are minimised.

Older children are increasingly encouraged to consider safe practices themselves. For example, through discussion they learn about using slides and bikes correctly and safely to keep themselves and their friends safe and to prevent accidents. Good opportunities are taken on trips and in the outdoor play space to develop children's safety awareness. They use a toy zebra crossing and signs to support their road safety awareness and talk about the importance of 'staying close to your adult' when out and about. All children participate in fire evacuation practices ensuring all can evacuate calmly and swiftly in an emergency. Children's safety is clearly given high priority in the nursery. Risk assessments are conducted by the first on duty each day to ensure the areas are safe and suitable before children attend. In addition comprehensive safety checks are conducted yearly to ensure all equipment including electrical items are safe to use. Children's welfare is protected in terms of child protection issues. Staff are secure in their knowledge of appropriate procedures to follow in the event of concerns for children's safety or child abuse. Senior staff have attended training relevant to their roles. Written procedures are in place and shared with parents, enabling them to feel secure in staff's commitment to the protection of all children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children enjoy their time at the nursery. They are interested and actively involved in a good range of first-hand play experiences. As a result, children make progress in development as they explore and learn through play. Resources and toys are attractively presented further engaging children's interest and involvement. Effective systems, such as rotas and activity plans are used to ensure a good variety of activities throughout the day. The 'Birth to three matters' framework is used as a tool to ensure that the youngest children make progress in all areas of development. For example, younger children develop their language skills, becoming skilful communicators, as they talk with staff during a dressing up activity. They talk about the clothes and 'clippie cloppy' shoes they are wearing. They practise personal independence skills of dressing as they choose and try on clothes, attempting various fastenings. Staff observe children during play and note down developmental progress, this information is used to plan further activities to help children to build on the skills they already have.

A supportive environment is evident. Staff are genuine in their approach to children. Speaking to them in an enthusiastic and positive way and celebrating children's achievements offering praise and encouragement. Children are happy and confident as a result. Good relationships are formed in each room between children and staff. The 'key worker' system enables parents to form close working relationships with the particular member of staff responsible for the general day to day care of their child. Ensuring information is shared for the benefit of the children. Effective co-working between staff, and the smaller size of the nursery means that all children get to know all staff, resulting in a calm and relaxed environment. This also supports smooth transitions as children move up through the rooms as they grow and develop. Children's

individual needs are well catered for. Routines of the day offer good opportunities for rest, relaxation, active play and meals. The youngest children's individual routines are respected as they are fed and put down to sleep as they require and in consultation with parents rather than at pre-set times. Children are confident to approach staff to join in play or for a cuddle and comfort, this is appropriately reciprocated by staff who take time to listen to and respond to children.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall with some outstanding aspects. Senior staff working in the pre-school have an excellent understanding of the Foundation Stage. They show a strong commitment to continually improving the education provision through closely working with other professionals, accessing training and using relevant literature. Recent changes in the staff structure in the pre-school room mean that senior staff are managing all planning of activities and observations of children's development. As a result, new systems for identifying children's next steps in learning are not fully embedded and, as a result, are not yet showing the positive impact on maximising children's progress. Good relationships are fostered between staff, parents and children, as such a warm and inclusive environment is provided. Systems are in place to ensure those with learning difficulties or disabilities are appropriately supported. Children are active learners in this setting; staff know children well and endeavour to plan activities that are of interest to individuals. Some innovative and thought-provoking activities are provided that capture children's interest and curiosity, supporting their development as they learn through play and exploration. For example, during a water play activity children investigate how they can quickly transport water from one large container to another across the playground. They use jugs and lengths of drain pipe. This supports their knowledge and understanding of the world and mathematical problem solving skills. This excellent practice is not always reflected in all areas of learning. Activities to support children's knowledge of letter sounds are sometimes less inspiring.

Topics are beginning to be used more effectively to support children to make links in their learning and to ensure children access activities that cover all six areas of learning. Children explore the subject of autumn. Here they develop knowledge and understanding of the world and their physical skills as they go for walks in the local area, collecting leaves and discussing the changes in the environment, thus also supporting their language and communication skills. They develop their creativity as they use the leaves during painting and craft activities. The younger ones show an awareness of mathematical concepts as they correctly compare the size, shapes and colours of the leaves. Children are increasingly provided with opportunities to initiate their own ideas and activities. This fosters children's enjoyment and ensures they are keen learners. A group concentrate for long periods as they use a construction set. They engage in conversation with their peers to describe their actions and negotiate blocks to use and how to build. This demonstrates the children have good language and social skills as they work well together. Staff are competent in their knowledge of how children learn and ensure time is given for children to return to activities to extend their ideas and enjoyment further. Full consideration is not yet given to how other areas of learning can be incorporated into these popular activities to ensure the more able children are progressing in all areas of development equally. For example, bringing in opportunities for literacy with mark making or opportunities to view text and extending mathematical knowledge.

Children show very good personal independence skills. They operate confidently and independently in the nursery. Setting tables for meals, managing their own toileting needs and selecting toys and resources. They also develop a sense of responsibility as they help to tidy

away after the activities. Children behave well overall. They are learning to share and take turns when supported by staff. Some older children are very willing and confident to share their ideas and join in conversations and are beginning to develop skills of listening to others. Staff manage this well in an appropriate and sensitive manner. They have considered systems to further support children's good behaviour, but have not yet implemented the system. For example, developing 'nursery promises' with the children, helping them to share their understanding of expectations for behaviour. Senior staff are exceedingly skilled at responding to unexpected opportunities for children's learning through everyday activities. A child brings in a candle for the letter sound table, this leads to a discussion about cakes and as a result the children bake a cake together. The activity to look at letter sounds initially supporting children's communication, language and literacy leads to wider areas of learning. The children observe how mixtures change when mixing and baking the cake, supporting their knowledge and understanding of the world. They use concepts of maths when measuring and adding ingredients and develop social skills of turn taking as they work cooperatively together. Most importantly the children have fun and develop their self-esteem as they take part in activities of their choice and use their own ideas.

Time is organised well to offer a balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities. Children are given good opportunities to pursue their interests. Whilst most children settle for a story a young child is able to take part in a painting activity. He becomes engrossed in exploring the texture and colours, using tools and his hands to mix paint upon the paper. The young child develops his concentration skills as appropriate, as he is given time to enjoy and complete the picture for as long as he chooses. He then joins the group and listens well to the rest of the story. This evidences the skills of the staff and their in-depth knowledge of the individual children. Children are purposefully occupied in play. Routines of the day offer time for children to play both indoors and outdoors. Time for active play and restful activities are provided. Children are constantly making progress in development as opportunities for learning are seized during daily events. Senior staff use effective questioning to help children to think and learn. For example, at snack time children develop mathematical concepts as they count those present and ensure there are sufficient cups for all. A young child knows that to make sure all children can have a second piece of bread stick equally, 'the ones left could be broken in half'. Children's self-esteem and confidence is supported as staff offer meaningful praise and encouragement in response to children's ideas and thoughts.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are clearly valued and respected in this setting. They settle quickly and calmly as parents leave, with appropriate comfort and support by staff to ensure both children and parents have a good start to the day. Good relationships are fostered between staff and the children. A happy and friendly atmosphere is evident. Important social skills are developed as children are encouraged to be considerate of others' needs. Behaviour is good and more experienced staff are skilled at managing behaviour in a way that encourages children to consider the consequence of their actions. Staff are sensitive to children's developmental stages and encourage skills of turn taking and sharing. Children explore their local community through trips to the garden centre and walks out. They talk about and celebrate important events in the children's lives, whether it be birthdays, a new baby or extensions to their home. Resources in the nursery reflect positive images of the wider society and help children to explore people's similarities and differences in an open and positive way. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is appropriately fostered.

Effective communication between staff, parents and relevant professionals ensure that all children are equally supported to make progress in their development. A wealth of information is shared with parents about the setting's policies and practices, through booklets and displays and discussions. Relevant information is recorded as required to ensure the individual needs of the children are catered for. Staff appropriately take time to verbally feedback to parents each day and use written methods such as daily diaries to ensure information is shared, promoting continuity in children's care. Good systems are in place to actively seek feedback from parents via newsletters and through a comments box, where parents can share issues anonymously if they prefer. The quality of the partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. This ensures all are working together effectively to benefit the children's learning environment. Parents are provided with good detail about the education curriculum, with some information provided about ways parents can further support children's learning at home through worthwhile play based activities. Newsletters include future plans for activities. For example, the week's letter sound is shared to enable parents and children to look at home for items that begin with a particular sound and bring them to the sound table. Opportunities are created periodically for parents to see and discuss their child's development record. Fewer formal opportunities are created at present for parents to take part in initial developmental assessments or to share what they already know about their child and identify the next steps in learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's safety and welfare is protected as they are cared for by staff who are suitable to work alongside children, hold relevant qualifications and have appropriate and varied experience of childcare. More than half of the staff team are qualified to Level 3 in childcare and all staff attend additional training courses to benefit the care and learning for the children. There is a strong sense of team work, staff share skills and good practice. Ratios of adults to children are well maintained and often exceed those required. Consequently all children receive good quality care and attention according to their individual needs. Staff have time to develop strong relationships with children and parents. Parents' wishes are noted and respected. All policies and written procedures are in place and used effectively by staff to ensure the smooth day to day running of the setting. Records are completed, shared with parents and stored confidentially as required. All requirements for providing day care are met. The nursery shows a strong commitment to always building upon the good practice to further benefit the childcare provision. They use effective systems of self-evaluation and reflect upon their skills throughout team meetings and individual supervisions with the manager. Training and advice are taken on board to continually build on and improve areas of practice. Overall, children's needs are met.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The excellent system for evaluating the quality of care has not as yet effectively been used to formally assess the quality of teaching and learning in the education curriculum. The manager has great enthusiasm and confidence in the staff delivering the education curriculum. Whilst this is positive it has somewhat left the senior in the pre-school to manage all aspects of the education and as such a formal system for ensuring all six areas of learning are equally covered is not fully in place. There is a strong commitment to striving to always improve the education of the children. Training is accessed, advice from relevant professionals is actively sought and acted upon in a positive way. The learning environment is well organised. Resources are accessible to the children and of high quality. Activities on the whole are rich, varied and imaginative engaging children's interest and helping them to make progress.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the setting agreed to improve the policies for uncollected children and child protection. In addition it was agreed that all staff would cover health and safety including child protection policies through induction in their first week of employment. The setting also agreed to ensure that policies and procedures are shared with parents. The setting have addressed all these issues effectively. All policies and procedures include the necessary details to ensure children are safe and well protected. Staff are clear of all practices as they take part in a comprehensive induction package; again ensuring children are safe in their care. All nursery policies are contained in a file in the nursery entrance with some displayed for easy reference for parents. This promotes good working relationships for the benefit of the children.

At the last education inspection the setting agreed to provide further support for children to develop early mark making skills. This has been addressed well in the setting. Children have daily and free access to pencils, crayons and writing implements, which they use to draw and make attempts to write or write their own names on work. In addition tools and resources are added to role play areas to enable children to develop their awareness of writing for a purpose. Children use pens and charts when pretending to take notes in the hospital play or when playing with office equipment. The setting are beginning to introduce good systems to encourage children to make marks and write in daily routines, for example, ticking the chart to indicate they have been the 'happy helper'; setting the table for snack time. The setting were also required to ensure all parents are aware of the potential to access their children's development records. This has been addressed through verbal communication and through written information in the nursery prospectus. In addition specific dates are scheduled for all parents to have opportunity to spend time with staff viewing and discussing their child's development record. Ensuring that all are working together to support children to reach their maximum potential.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since April 1 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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.

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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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):

- review the nutritional content of some foods provided, with reference to always striving to actively promote a healthy diet and further supporting children to make healthy choices, in addition consider the suitability of some teas provided for the babies
- further increase the use of the outdoor play areas to enable children to gain maximum benefit from the fresh air and opportunities to explore an increasing range of play activities on a larger scale

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):

- review the system of planning activities; continuing to use the in-depth knowledge of children's interests and ideas to plan relevant, imaginative and challenging activities that cover all six areas of learning equally and provide increasing challenge for more able children
- develop systems of further supporting staff in the pre-school to monitor and evaluate the education provision to ensure that all six areas of learning are equally and comprehensively covered.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk