



## The Croydon Playcare Co

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124925
<b>Inspection date</b>	16 January 2007
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<b>Registered person</b>	The Croydon Play Care Company
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care, Out of School 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](http://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?

The Croydon Playcare Centre is a charitable organisation that originally opened in 1976. It has been registered to provide full day care and out of school care since 1993. The purpose built building is located in a quite residential road close to central Croydon.

Priority is given to working lone parents. Most of the parents whose children attend the nursery live or work in the local area. Children who attend the out of school club are collected from local schools. The premises comprises of three main play rooms, a milk and main kitchen, children's toilets and nappy changing facilities. The out of school facilities include an ITC suite, three play rooms, a large hall, kitchen, toilet facilities, a separate art and craft portacabin and a secure outside area which has an adventure playground. Other facilities in the building include, a soft play room, offices, laundry facilities and a staff facilities. There is secure outside play area for the younger children.

The Croydon Playcare Centre is open Monday to Friday, 51 weeks a year from 07:45 until 18:30. A maximum of 44 children may attend the nursery at any one time and 100 children may attend the out of school club. Children are based in rooms according to their age and they can attend for a variety of sessions. There are 129 children on roll throughout the facility. Sixteen children receive funding for nursery education. The centre currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and children with English as an additional language.

There are 35 staff who work with the children throughout the provision, six of whom work on a part-time basis. Thirty three staff have early years qualifications. Qualified cooks and cleaning staff are also employed. The setting receives support from the local authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Throughout the provision staff take positive steps to promote the good health of children. Children are cared for in a clean environment, where they learn the importance of good hygiene and personal care. They understand that they must wash their hands after creative activities and after using the toilet, to reduce the risk of cross-contamination. Staff are proactive in reminding and encouraging children to do so independently. The children who attend the out of school facility also demonstrate a good understanding. Children are further protected from the risk of cross-infection because staff follow effective health and hygiene procedures, for instance they implement a strict no outdoor shoe policy in the baby room and use appropriate materials for cleaning up after mealtimes and creative activities.

Children's health is protected as staff are first aid trained should a child require first aid treatment. Fully stocked first aid boxes are available in each room, taken on outings and are in place on the mini buses. All documentation for the recording of accidents and medicines are in place and recorded accurately. Parental consent has been sought for Calpol or pain relief medication to be administered to children if needed and labelled bottles are stored in fridges. However, some of the medication has expired, therefore may be ineffective if given to children. Effective written policies for illness and procedures to promote the health of the children are in place and are followed.

Children thrive from having regular healthy and nutritious drinks and food which are more than adequate in quantities for their needs. The food is properly prepared on site by qualified cooks and complies with children's dietary and religious requirements. Children are beginning to understand the benefits of a healthy diet. Topics and activities are planned to teach the children about the importance of a healthy lifestyle and how the body works. They have access to fresh drinking water, milk and fresh fruit during snack times.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities which are successful in developing their physical skills and contribute to their good health. Each day there are planned activities, both indoor and out, to help them develop control of their bodies. They use the soft play room, adventure playground and the large hall for group games. They become increasingly aware of how activity affects their bodies and make comparisons of heart beats and temperatures of their bodies

after exercise. Children's fine motor skills are developed well, through activities such as construction and threading. Children demonstrate a good sense of space and move confidently around the nursery.

Children attending the holiday play scheme have daily opportunities to go out and take part in physical activities such as swimming and have access to an adventure playground. During the out of school club they take part in activities such as soft football and table tennis.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

The premises are very safe and secure. Children mostly have ample space to play in a building that is suitable for its purpose, although good use is not always made of the space in the baby room. Children are cared for in a welcoming environment where they have a sense of belonging. For example, when children enter the premises they have their own named pegs and boxes to put their comforters away. They have access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

Children are able to move around safely, freely and independently as the trained health and safety officer undertakes effective risk assessments on a regular basis. Children learn how to keep themselves safe, both inside and outside the nursery, through topics covered such as 'Who looks after us?'. Effective outings procedures are followed to ensure that children are safe when on trips.

Children have access to an ample amount of appropriate resources and equipment that are well maintained and conform to safety standards. They are organised to create an accessible and stimulating environment and children are able to independently select them in most areas of the provision. Staff monitor and supervise children's choice of toys to make sure they are safe and appropriate for their age and stage of development. Staff in the out of school club plan a variety of games and art and craft activities for the children and have a good range of resources readily available for the children.

Child protection procedures in line with the local safeguarding children's boards are complied with by fully trained staff who take effective steps to protect children from abuse and neglect. Children are highly supervised at all times by an ample number of staff who have all undergone relevant vetting procedures.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are met and staff know the children very well. Children settle well at the nursery, they enter confidently when they arrive at the nursery and make themselves at home. Settling in procedures for new children are effective in helping the children to separate from their carers with the least amount of anxiety for both parents and child. Children's independence is developing well. They choose between a variety of toys, books and activities which appeal to all. However, within the baby room good use is not made of the available space to enable children to explore the environment.

Children are very happy and busy, they really enjoy their time at the nursery. Behaviour is good, friendships are established. Children play well together and rules are understood. They tell staff when they are upset, if things go wrong for them or if they need help. Staff are good role models. They get involved in play alongside the children, to constantly support and talk to children during their play, therefore children are becoming confident communicators.

Staff have a good understanding of the Birth to three matters framework and have implemented it into their planning. However, they do not use observations of children's development to fully plan for their individual needs, and activities are not always evaluated to ensure that play opportunities are appropriate.

Children attending the out of school provision state that they enjoy coming to the club. They express views such as, "You can make stuff and do what ever you want, not do something specific like school", " I have loads of friends here", "Sometimes something exciting happens." Planning for the holiday play scheme indicates that good use is made of the local environment and children have visited places such as Museums. There are appropriate planned indoor and outdoor activities for children attending the after school facilities for example, arts and crafts good use is made of the ICT suite where children have supervised access to computers.

#### Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make steady progress towards the early learning goals with the support of staff. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children develop and learn. They plan a range of activities, based on real life situations, that help children progress in most areas of learning. They are good role models and demonstrate a positive attitude towards learning, with an enthusiastic manner. The organisation of the resources lends itself to provide a free flow play situation where children can be independent in their learning. Children's written assessments do not clearly show the next steps of learning; therefore, written planning does not take into account children's individual needs. Evaluations of focused activities do not demonstrate that teaching strategies have been successful, in meeting the learning aims or outcomes of activities.

Children develop good relationships with adults and other children in the nursery. They learn to co-operate and work well together by playing games, taking turns and helping to tidy up. Children are beginning to understand differences in their lives to the lives of others around them, through looking at festivals and countries during topic work. Children listen and concentrate well on chosen and adult-led activities. They are very happy and they enjoy their time in the nursery. They attend to their personal needs such as, cleaning teeth and dressing.

Children speak very confidently to peers and adults. They talk openly during activities about themselves and their families. They express their ideas and experiences well. Children have access to a range of writing materials. They have opportunities to recognise words and text and are beginning to use phonic sound to spell. Children enjoy books and handle them carefully. They spend time reading and sharing books with friends and adults; they can re-tell well known stories by looking at the pictures and use books for referencing.

Children count confidently and recognise numbers. They choose number activities during free play and enjoy number rhymes and songs. Children are beginning to understand the concept of simple addition and subtraction; they know what is one more or one less. Children's understanding of space, shape and measure is developing well; they are able to follow and make simple colour patterns with pegs. Children learn how to use numbers in everyday situations and compare size and shape through practical activities such as comparing the size and shapes of musical instruments.

Children investigate using their senses. They discuss similarities and differences using natural objects and experiment with items such as magnets. Children have access to a computer and have ample opportunities to use programmable toys and equipment to aid their learning such as electronic tills and calculators and cause and effect toys. Children are beginning to understand past and present through topics such as looking and comparing old fashioned transport to modern day transportation. Children learn about different cultures and beliefs through planned topic work, songs and reading stories.

Children use their senses to explore and describe experiences such as tasting and smelling food, listening to music, and feeling a range of textures, including manufactured and natural. They play musical instruments and experiment with sound independently. Children have opportunities to develop their imagination in role-play situations and through using small world activities such as the farm or dolls houses. They enjoy using their imagination during creative activities such as painting, sand and water, which they have regular access to.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Equality of opportunity and anti discriminatory practice is actively promoted for all children. Children and staff attending the nursery come from a variety of cultures and backgrounds. Children attending the pre -school room are encouraged to develop a positive view of the wider community through acknowledging festivals, talking about their lives and experiences. However, throughout the rest of the provision children have limited access to a meaningful range of activities and resources to promote a positive view of the wider world, to assist in increasing their awareness of diversity and understanding of others.

The provision fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Effective steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting, in partnership with parents and other relevant parties. Staff are aware that some children have special needs and are proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. This ensures children have equal opportunities to maximise their enjoyment and potential. Whilst children's individual education plans do not clearly highlight how a child has progressed and the types of activities and support that children has received to help them improve, staff can verbally feedback very well their knowledge of the progress children have made and how it has been achieved.

Children are helped to understand responsible behaviour. Staff reinforce appropriate strategies, in line with policies and procedures, therefore behaviour is good throughout the whole provision.

Children are treated with respect and are given lots of praise and encouragement to promote their self-esteem and confidence.

Children benefit greatly from concrete relationships between their parents and staff, helping them receive consistent care both individually and as a group. Parents are kept very well informed about the service and their child's activities and progress, this contributes to continuity in the children's care. The management committee consists of parents only. They are fully involved in the running of the nursery and organise fundraising activities.

Partnerships with parents is good. Children benefit from positive relationships between their parents and staff, helping them receive consistent care both individually and as a group. Parents receive good information about the Foundation Stage, outlining what and how children will learn. This ensures parents understand that play has an important role in developing children's skills for the next stage of learning. Staff involve parents in their child's learning through regular newsletters, which give suggestions regarding activities that can extend learning at home. Parents contribute to their child's assessment during regular parents' meetings.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by suitably qualified and experienced staff who have a good understanding of child care and development. Robust recruitment procedures are in place to ensure staff are vetted appropriately. Staff regularly have appraisals to ensure they are suitable to carry out their duties and attend training to extend their skills and knowledge. Staff turn over is very low and most of the staff have been employed for a number of years and so know families very well and have good relationships with them enabling children to feel at home and at ease. This means they are confident to initiate their own play and learning

Child ratios are exceeded at times as the deployment of staff is good. Equipment and toys are stored in easily accessible low storage systems in most areas so children can independently make choices about what they want to do. The organisation of space and resources mostly meets children's needs effectively, although staff do not always make good use of the available space in the baby room.

The required records, policies and procedures which contribute to children's health, safety and welfare are all maintained. Policies and procedures work effectively, in practice, as staff are kept up-to-date through meetings and formal supervision sessions.

Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides care.

Leadership and management of the care and nursery education is good. The executive directors take an active part in the daily management and running of the nursery and support the managers in their roles. The management team are effective in promoting an inclusive environment in which every child matters. There is a strong commitment to develop and improve the provision and use is made of available outside support. However, systems to monitor and evaluate the curriculum and care that is on offer, are not always effective.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

Steps have been taken to address the recommendations set at the last care inspection. To ensure children's safety, an effective system has now been devised and implemented to record any visitors that enter the provision. There are now suitable procedures in place to ensure that any person who has not been vetted is never left alone with children. Ample staff are now deployed in appropriate areas at the beginning of each session thorough out the provision.

A range of appropriate activities and resources that promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice are in place in the pre-school area. However, they are not available in the areas for younger children and in the out of school provision.

Documentation has been improved as the registration system for children now shows their arrival and departure times. A written statement on behaviour management is now in place and staff follow effective procedures to manage children's behaviour.

The range of equipment for children in the home corner/imaginary play area has been increased so that children now have more opportunities to express their imagination and creativity.

Steps have also been taken to address the key issues raised at the last education inspection. Children are now provided with regular opportunities to develop calculation in maths, encouraging them to compare numbers and to develop an understanding of addition and subtraction. Children now have opportunities within small group times to learn the concept of more and less. Resources are available to them to encourage them to develop their skills in calculation.

Children are regularly able to use their imagination in music and are provided with opportunities to recognise and explore how sounds can be changed. Children regularly take part in planned music sessions where they explore a range of different instruments and experiment with sound and pitch and learn how to use instruments in different ways.

Children are provided with opportunities to recognise the importance of staying healthy and to recognise the changes that occur to their bodies when they are active. They are given regular opportunities to explore different topics including having a health lifestyle and how the body works, where they look at bones in the body, compare and looking at differences. During physical activities, they listen to heart beats and compare the differences before and after exercise and how to maintain healthy bodies through exercise and healthy eating.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that require 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):

- devise and implement a system to check that medication is in date
- ensure that babies have ample space to play
- improve the activities and resources for nurturing children's awareness of diversity

#### 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):

- improve planning to ensure that it clearly highlights learning intentions and incorporates children's individual needs and the extension of activities for more able children (also applies to care)
- improve the systems to monitor and evaluate the education and care that is on offer (also applies to care).

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)