

Pipsqueaks

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Jane Wakelen
Setting Address	Harris House, North Road, Queenborough, Kent, ME11 5HA
Telephone number	01795 666420
E-mail	pipsqueaksnusery@hotmail.com
Registered person	Pipsqueaks
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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Pipsqueaks Day Nursery opened in 2003 and operates from four rooms in a two storey building, in Queenborough, on the Isle of Sheppey. A maximum of 44 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.00 to 19.00. All children share access to a small, secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 28 children aged from four months to under five years on roll. Of these, 11 children receive funding for early education. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The nursery employs six members of staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children develop a basic understanding of hygiene procedures, such as washing hands after using the toilet and using tissues for their noses. Although, staff occasionally forget to ensure tissues are easily accessible all of the time. Children are occasionally reminded about why this is important and are able to be independent when visiting the toilet. Staff follow hygiene routines when changing children's nappies and ensure the food tables are cleaned with antibacterial spray, before children sit down for meal times. However, toilets are only cleaned routinely once a day, thus not fully promoting children's health or risk of cross infection. The majority of staff hold a first aid qualification and have a first aid box available upstairs in the baby room and in the main room. There is a sick child policy in place which is shared with parents to inform them of the procedures in place.

Children choose a healthy option at snack time, such as fresh fruit and yoghurts. They are encouraged to be independent, making choices of snack and then pouring their own drink, either milk or water. Children enjoy the social occasion of meal times and sit around tables which are child-sized. They are given a hot meal at lunch time and a pudding, although a menu is not available on the notice-board for parents to access. Staff are aware of children's likes and dislikes, and record all children's food intolerances and allergies on a sheet which is accessible to staff in the kitchen. Children are able to freely access drinking water throughout the session from a jug with cups at the side of the room.

Children have limited opportunities to use the small outside area due to its size and accessibility. However, staff take children on outings to local areas that are within walking distance, such as the local park or grass area behind the fire station, offering children the opportunity to benefit from fresh air and exercise. They have opportunities to use the tricycles indoors, together with the parachute, soft balls and hoops, to practise and develop their spatial awareness and large physical skills. Children enjoy using the wooden bridge, climbing the stairs and using the large rubber bricks to build and join balancing beams to walk along.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Children play in areas suitable for their age of development. For example, the under two year olds use two rooms upstairs and the over two year olds use the large room downstairs. Babies have two rooms upstairs where they are able to access a range of toys suitable for their age and stage of development. They use one room for playing and the other room as a sleep room, although there are plans to change these two rooms around. The older children can make choices of the equipment placed around the room downstairs, in the storage containers or access the few activities put out for them on the tables. The room is divided into areas, such as the book corner and the role play area, but the lack of partitions throughout the large available play space, results in children running around and not using the toys to their full potential. Children use a small room for their meals and sleep times, which allows children a quiet space to rest in. The toys and resources are in a suitable condition for the children to play with, and suitable for the different stages of development of the children attending. Toys are stored in boxes around the room where children are able to access them safely.

A risk assessment has been carried out on the premises, although this is not done on a regular basis, therefore, some hazards go unnoticed, such as the missing socket covers and the danger of the radiator placed on the high shelf without securing it to anything. Young babies crawl around in the baby room and place fingers near the door hinges, narrowly missing trapping their fingers. Thus children's safety is compromised throughout the nursery. The temperature of the food and fridge is monitored on a regular basis, but the safety of ensuring children do not access the kitchen area is not fully enforced as staff often forget to shut the door, thus allowing children to access areas that are not safe. Fire drills have been practised on a regular basis with children in the room downstairs, but staff with babies in the upstairs room are not clear on procedures to follow in an emergency and have never carried out a practice, thus putting children's safety in danger.

Staff have a basic understanding of child protection procedures and are aware of the policy in place to safeguard children. However, some staff that have not received their suitability checks are allowed to change babies nappies, occasionally without full supervision. The supervisor has the relevant information available, although some documentation is not always easily accessible.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are welcomed into the setting and the majority are settled in the nursery. Children under two years play in the room upstairs accessing their toys from baskets and containers placed on the floor, and move around freely. They enjoy interaction from the staff and move towards the adults with a book to share or a toy to play with. Staff talk to the children and meet their needs by following their individual sleep routines and milk feeds, offering cuddles and having close contact when playing and tickling the children. However, not all staff have an understanding of the Birth to three framework, therefore, children's progress is not always fully extended or recorded. Children over two years play in the large room downstairs, accessing toys from around the room in storage boxes or choosing activities staff have put out on tables. They are able to move around freely, but the less confident children occasionally appear overwhelmed with the space due to lack of partitions to give individual areas. Children approach the staff for support or to show them their achievements, and most staff freely give praise and encouragement to promote children's self esteem.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. There is a key-worker system in place and staff carry out observations of individual children which is then given to the relevant key-worker. There are long term plans in place which identify the topic to be covered in a particular month, but do not indicate the aspects to be covered. Short term plans are in place and list an activity with the resources, aspect and stepping stone to be covered. The next steps recorded on the planning are not always linked with observations, therefore, do not enable children to make satisfactory progress in their development. Staff lack an understanding of the aim of the activity and as a result, are unable to extend the activity where appropriate to offer a challenge for the more able child. Staff complete an evaluation from the activity plan but this does not reflect the learning that has taken place and is not used to provide children's next steps in their development. Many staff make observations without understanding what the aim of the observation is or the significance of the progress the child is making, which results in plans that are not taken from children's next steps and offer little extension, or suitable activities for the more able children.

Children make choices from the limited opportunities available and often ask for alternatives, such as painting or water play. Staff support children's request and join in with their play, but do not offer any extension or choices for children, such as different types of painting. Children enjoy using different collage materials to make their Christmas cards, using the glue with keen enthusiasm. They enjoy using the role play area, but this area is often not promoted with a good range of resources, thus children do not sustain their interest for a good period of time. The dressing up clothes are available, but thrown in the bottom of the trolley which does not help children learn to respect the resources. Children have some opportunities to sing rhymes and songs in group sessions and access the musical instruments, although often with little adult support or input. Children show a keen interest in books and enjoy sharing stories and books with the staff. They are able to turn the pages correctly, but have little encouragement in everyday activities to link letters and sounds. The lack of labels and regular opportunities to make marks prevents children gaining an understanding that print carries meaning. Children make good use of the shaving foam, practising large and small arm movements, which keeps their attention for an extended period of time.

Children have regular access to the computer developing their mouse skills and learning to use technology. However, some children tend to dominate this activity and this prevents the less confident children from taking a turn. Children have opportunities to go out for a walk observing changes in their environment and collect natural materials, such as leaves to make collage pictures. Children enjoy using the different construction materials to build, join and construct, especially when supported by the staff. Opportunities to learn about different festivals and celebrations from around the world help support children's understanding of diversity. Some children are able to count beyond ten and use objects to support their understanding of number. However, the lack of written numbers around the room and regular opportunities to use number in routine activities prevents children progressing fully in their development. Most children are able to name the colours of objects and some children are naming two dimensional shapes, such as triangle and square. They have some opportunities to look at weight, volume and measure, but this is not on a regular basis.

Children have regular opportunities to develop their fine motor skills, using pencils, completing puzzles and putting on aprons or dressing up clothes. They show good control when sorting the small beads and glass pebbles, and building the train track on the floor. Children are encouraged to take turns using the different resources and to help the less able children or quiet children to put their name on the tree to self register. Some of the confident children offer to help the younger children to complete activities or what pictures to press on the computer.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are developing their understanding of society through learning about different multicultural festivals and access toys, such as finger puppets, and books and dolls reflecting diversity. Children have opportunities to dress up wearing different outfits from around the world, taste different food and enjoy playing various musical instruments, such as Bongo drums. They see pictures around the wall promoting positive images of diversity and are encouraged to accept each others differences and similarities. Staff know the children well, supporting the families and talking to children about their home circumstances promoting children's self esteem and sense of belonging. Thus, children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural needs are fostered.

Staff support all children and are aware of those children requiring support in different areas. All children are included in the activities and some children receive additional input to help them achieve in all areas. Support and liaison with parents ensures children receive continuity of care and fully promotes children's welfare.

Children's understanding of right and wrong is promoted through consistent boundaries which enables them to learn desirable behaviour. They are encouraged to take turns and share the toys, and staff offer praise for good behaviour. Confident children are aware of the rules of the setting and openly inform staff when others are not conforming. Staff react to children who present unwanted behaviour and distract them, with an explanation about why the behaviour is not acceptable and then offering an alternative activity.

Partnership with parents is inadequate. Children's development records are available for parents on request and an annual report is given to the parents regarding their child's progress. However, the weakness in the planning, observation and recording of children's development does not fully support children's progress or involve parents in the development and assessment records. Parents are kept informed about their child's care through daily, verbal communication. The babies have contact books, which have been recently introduced, where staff record the babies daily routine, such as sleeps and nappy changes together with activities and meals. Parents are encouraged to write in these with any messages relevant to the child's care. Parents access the notice board in the entrance area and have access to the folder containing the policies. A complaints poster is displayed in the entrance hall and a suggestion box is available for parents to note any ideas or changes they would like implemented.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

Children are welcomed into the setting and staff respect children as individuals. Children's personal care needs are met, with babies being able to follow their own care routines from home. The majority of staff hold an early years qualification and attend short courses to update their skills and knowledge. However, the lack of understanding of some staff of the Foundation Stage results in some children not being able to meet their full potential in their learning. There are procedures in place for the recruitment of staff, but these are not robust and as a result, two staff are working with the children that do not hold a current police check. This does not support children's welfare or wellbeing.

The leadership and management of the nursery is inadequate. The supervisor has not developed a formal system of monitoring the effectiveness of the teaching and this has resulted in many weaknesses within the Foundation Stage curriculum. Observations are recorded of children's learning, but are not used effectively to plan children's next steps to inform future plans. This results in children not being provided with activities that meet their needs or provide a challenge for the more able child. Staff meet regularly to discuss the planning, activities and any concerns they have, but receive limited direction to how to improve the education provision.

All documentation is in place, although not always well organised. Personal information about the staff and children is kept confidential. There are a set of written policies that have been adopted from the Pre-school Learning Alliance, although the complaints policy needs updating to include the current contact details for Ofsted. There is a complaints log available. The setting does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were six recommendations from the previous inspection. Of these three were for the care and three for nursery education. All three care recommendations have been met. Children are protected when taking medicine as parents now sign to give permission for the administration of medication. Parents have access to the complaints policy, although the telephone number and contact details need updating to reflect recent changes. Children are given regular opportunities to look at books, play with musical instruments from around the world, jigsaws, posters around the room and role play equipment, to see positive images of diversity.

There were three recommendations regarding the Nursery Education. These relate to the action for nursery education from this inspection. Children are not given daily opportunities to develop their skills in solving mathematical problems or learn to recognise numbers, and encouraged to use them for a purpose. Children have limited opportunities to develop their language and literacy skills in routine and planned activities, or gain an understanding that print carries meaning or link sounds and letters. The planning system does not meet the needs of the children and does not provide a balanced curriculum.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection Ofsted received three complaints relating to National Standard 1: Suitable Person, National Standard 2: Organisation, National Standard 3: Care, learning and play, National Standard 6: Safety, National Standard 7: Health, National Standard 8: Food and Drink, National Standard 11: Behaviour, National Standard 12: Working in partnership with parents and National Standard 14: Documentation.

The first complaint raised concerns regarding staff qualifications. Ofsted carried out an unannounced visit to the setting to investigate. As a result of the visit, a compliance notice was issued for failure to comply with National Standard 2. In addition, five actions were raised under National Standard 2: Organisation, National Standard 4: Physical Environment and National Standard 6. This resulted in a further unannounced visit by Ofsted and three further actions were raised under National Standard 7: Health and National Standard 6. The provider responded confirming that the actions had been met appropriately. A further unannounced visit took place and it was found the National Standards were being met.

The second complaint raised concerns regarding ratios, safety of children, behaviour management, suitability of the provider and the well being of children. An unannounced visit took place to investigate whether the provider was meeting the National Standards. As a result of this visit nine actions were raised under National Standard 2, National Standard 3, National Standard 6, National Standard 7, National Standard 11, National Standard 12 and National Standard 14. In addition four of the actions were raised as compliance notices under National Standard 2, National Standard 3, National Standard 7 and National Standard 14. A further monitoring visit was undertaken and the provider was found to be complying with the National Standards.

The third complaint raised concerns regarding students being left unsupervised with children, parents not being informed of food given to children and not all staff suitability checks are in place. Ofsted carried out an unannounced visit to discuss these concerns and make observations. As a result of this visit two actions were set under National Standard 1 and National Standard 3. A response was received from the provider which demonstrated that the actions had been met. No further action was taken by Ofsted and the provider remained qualified for registration at the time the investigation was closed.

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.

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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, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- ensure there are clearly defined procedures for emergency evacuation of the building, both upstairs and downstairs and ensure that fire drills are carried out for all children
- ensure all areas are made safe for children, especially the free standing radiator in the downstairs playroom
- ensure that there are effective procedures in place for checking that staff are suitable to work with children and that any person who has not been vetted is never left alone with children

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- implement a method of planning to provide children with a balanced curriculum, using children's next steps in their development to inform the planning, especially those working towards the Early Learning Goals

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

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