

Pipsqueaks

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY257399
Inspection date	30 June 2008
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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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

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 27 children aged from four months to under five years on roll. Of these, 11 children receive funding for early education.

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

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children develop a good understanding about the importance of personal hygiene routines such as washing their hands before they eat and after visiting the toilet, because staff give gentle reminders and simple explanations. Staff ensure children are protected from cross infection by making sure children use the antibacterial soap to wash their hands with individual paper towels to dry them and by implementing good hygiene routines when nappy changing. Children are protected in the event of an accident because staff hold current first aid certificates and ensure the first aid box is updated regularly. Written permission is obtained from parents to ensure emergency medical treatment and advice is sought from outside professionals if necessary, thus promoting children's welfare. A sick child policy is in place and this is shared with parents to ensure procedures are implemented effectively.

Children are able to learn about healthy lifestyles, learning the importance of exercise and eating healthily. Healthy options are made available to children for snack time such as fresh fruit, bread sticks and yoghurts. They are encouraged to be independent pouring their own drinks and have a choice of water or milk. Meal times consist of a hot meal and a pudding, with a weekly menu being shared with parents on the noticeboard. Staff are aware of children's individual likes and dislikes and of any dietary intolerances or allergies, thus ensuring that children are offered meals they enjoy. There are procedures in progress to record staff's knowledge of individual children's allergies onto children's place mats, further promoting children's well-being.

Children have opportunities to use large play equipment indoors on a regular basis, such as the parachute, Sco-gym and tricycles, thus supporting their physical development, co-ordination and spatial awareness. There is very limited play space outside, so staff work creatively to ensure children have good opportunities to benefit from fresh air and exercise. They enjoy visiting the local area helping with the 'Spring Watch' as shown on television, checking for different minibeasts and pond dipping. They visit the beach and are able to visit the local park to use the large play equipment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a safe, secure environment where they have room to move around freely and access the different toys and resources. Children under two have access to two rooms upstairs, which are clean and provide room for children to explore their surroundings. They have access to a variety of resources and toys, including balls, sand, electronic toys and small world, which are placed around the room for children to find and explore. The children over two years of age play in two rooms downstairs. They can independently choose where they would like to play and can select alternative resources to those chosen by the staff. The main play room is large, and staff have divided up the room with different areas, such as construction, messy area, role play and book area. However, the lack of partitions results in many toys being put in different areas and occasionally children's achievements spoilt by other children moving around the room or rolling balls, and knocking over towers of bricks or completed floor puzzles.

A risk assessment has been carried out on the premises and children are protected in the event of a fire as there are fire prevention measures in place, such as smoke detectors, fire

extinguishers and a fire blanket in the kitchen. A fire evacuation drill is recorded and displayed near the exits and a written record made of evacuation practices. Children both upstairs and downstairs are familiar with the procedures to follow in an emergency and know where the meeting place is off site. However, not all areas have been risked assessed effectively, such as the sleeping area for babies upstairs. Travel cots are used in the large area at the top of the stairs which is not fully protected from visitors or the open stair well. Locks have been put on doors to prevent children entering cupboards, where harmful substances are and a stairgate is in place across the kitchen door to ensure children do not enter this area. Children are reminded about keeping themselves safe, such as not standing on storage containers, throwing toys inside and how to hold the scissors carefully when cutting and sticking.

Staff have a satisfactory understanding about safeguarding children and have access to a file with all relevant information regarding signs and symptoms, contact telephone numbers and procedures to follow. The Kent and Medway Safeguarding Children handbook is available and all staff are aware of the procedures to follow should they have any concerns about children in their care. The manager is in the process of arranging training for all staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are greeted on arrival at the setting and all play together in one room downstairs until all staff have arrived. Children then go to play upstairs if they are two years and under or play downstairs if they are over two years. Staff work with a key person system to ensure that each child has a particular member of staff they are familiar with. Children have access to a satisfactory range of equipment that is located around the room in which they play. They enjoy support and interaction with the staff about their activity or about their family life, helping develop a sense of belonging and promoting their confidence. Staff give regular praise and display children's work around the room, promoting children's self-esteem. All children benefit from the small group sizes, helping them develop good relationships with staff.

Babies enjoy the opportunity to move around and explore. The room is bright and provides room for the babies to practise their skills in walking around the furniture or enjoy crawling into the tent to hide. They are given a range of natural materials to play with and staff take their lead from the children to extend their play. Each child follows their own sleep routine, although staff aim to have all children eating dinner together. Children enjoy cuddles with the staff and develop good relationships with them. The staff carry out regular observations of the children and record these in their individual files under the different areas of development. However, this system is not fully established at present to help inform future planning for each individual child.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a fair understanding about the Foundation Stage curriculum and use this knowledge to plan activities on a weekly basis. The setting is receiving support with their planning and as a result, the planning is in its infancy. Staff make regular observations of the children and file these under the six areas of learning. They then use this information to inform the following weeks plans. However, not all children's development is receiving equal attention and there is no method in place at present, to ensure all six areas are being given equal attention. Each child has an assessment record that has recently been established, which contains short observations and some narrative observations. Many observations are not evaluated, which prevents information being used to support each

child's individual learning. Staff have an awareness of the new Early Years Foundation Stage which will be implemented in September 2008. Staff are developing an awareness of their key children's interests and are beginning to use this information to plan a variety of new activities.

Children enjoy the small group sizes which enables them to begin to develop friendships and receive support from staff in various activities. The older children are familiar with the routine and help each other at tidy up time, putting bricks in containers or carrying a heavy box together. Staff give regular praise which helps support children's good behaviour. Children are learning to take turns and staff ensure children understand why this is important. They enjoy group discussions talking about their families, familiar stories or activities they are going to do. Children are enthusiastic when new activities are introduced, although occasionally staff lose children's interest by asking them to wait for other children to arrive at nursery. Children sing songs from memory and enjoy singing their welcome song, when they find their name on the apple to stick on the tree. They have lots of opportunities to make marks on paper, chalk boards and in shaving foam on tables. They show enjoyment looking at books and listening carefully when adults read books to the whole group at story time.

Children are developing a good understanding of number and enjoy singing number rhymes using children to count or their fingers to help with their concept of number. They count in practical activities, such as how many cups they have at snack time and how many legs on the spider. Children are beginning to use mathematical language in their play, such as the big circle and small flower. They name many two dimensional shapes such as square, triangle and circle. Children use three dimensional shapes to build and are gaining an understanding about measure when building towers of bricks and comparing the two. Children play with water using containers to gain an understanding about volume, although staff miss practical opportunities to extend this concept further, such as when pouring their drinks. They use programmes on the computer to support their numeracy skills and show good hand/eye co-ordination using the mouse to move around the screen. Children have good opportunities to build, construct and design using a range of resources and materials, although staff fail to promote this area fully by extending children's language skills. Children enjoy taking care of the nursery fish, taking responsibility to feed them carefully. They hunt for minibeasts and observe them with the magnifying glass showing wonder at the many legs on the wood louse and how the spider spins his web.

Children have opportunities to use the role play area on a daily basis, but due to the basic resources play is often limited and requires an adult to lead the play. There are dressing up clothes and accessories that children can use imaginatively, and enjoy being super heroes or familiar roles from home. Children have access to art and craft materials but show limited interest. However, when an adult becomes involved, such as making minibeasts from junk materials, children's interest is maintained and their knowledge extended. Children have access to percussion instruments and enjoy singing along to their music. Children show good fine physical skills using scissors to cut collage materials and pencil control when forming letters in their name.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are welcomed into the setting and begin to develop relationships with staff and some of their peers. They have a key worker who is responsible for keeping development records for children's learning and ensure they are making good progress and settling into the nursery. The majority of staff know their key children well and are beginning to develop activities to meet the children's individual interests. However, some children are not fully included in the

activities and wander around the room, without purpose. Children's family circumstances and language spoken at home are recorded on the children's record forms to ensure children's needs can be met. Children have opportunities to use different equipment, such as musical instruments, books and small world toys to extend and develop their understanding about diversity. However, there are few resources that reflect disability, preventing children gaining a full understanding about similarities and differences in people in their society. Staff are developing their resources to give extra support for children with communication needs and all children in helping make decisions about their day, such as displaying Makaton signs with the written word around the room. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children behave generally well when fully occupied or engaged in activities which hold their interest. Staff offer praise and encouragement to children to promote wanted behaviour, with children gaining an understanding about right and wrong. However, staff sometimes forget to give children an explanation about why some behaviour is not acceptable and therefore children are unable to understand the result of their actions, such as throwing toys or snatching from other children.

Partnership with parents of children receiving early education funding is satisfactory. Parents are asked to give personal information about their children such as children's likes and dislikes, sleep routines and what children like to play with, helping key workers identify children's individuality and therefore helping them to settle into the nursery. Staff are in the process of developing children's individual assessment files with a form for parents to sign to say they have seen the folder and the opportunity to make any written comments. At present the files do not contain a complete account of where children are in their development under the six areas of learning. Parents are told verbally on a daily basis about their child's day and have access to the many noticeboards and posters in the entrance area informing them about events in the nursery and daily information, such as the menu and recent fundraising activities. A complaints log is in place, including an updated policy with contact details for Ofsted.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children play in rooms downstairs and upstairs according to their age and stage of development. Staff are allocated key children and are responsible for ensuring the records of their development are kept up to date and shared with parents. Children's personal care needs are met, with babies following their own care routines from home. The majority of staff hold early years qualifications, but do not always use this knowledge effectively to ensure children's learning and development are promoted and extended.

The leadership and management of the nursery is satisfactory. Systems are gradually being developed to monitor staff's effectiveness through an appraisal system, where training needs are identified to support staff's developmental needs. Staff meet once a month to discuss any concerns, ideas or issues that have arisen and discuss the next month's events, activities and planning. There is a new system of planning being developed, which is being created by the staff working with children in the Foundation Stage and with support from the Early Years Advisory Teacher. Staff are making regular observations on children's development but are not evaluating these effectively to extend children's learning in all areas. Parents receive occasional questionnaires to comment on the service the nursery provides and staff work together to improve the service provided, taking into account parental comments.

All documentation is in place, although not well organised and staff find some documentation difficult to find. Personal information is kept in staff and children's files which are locked away and kept confidential. Written policies are in place which are adopted from the Pre School Learning Alliance, although some policies do not reflect current practice within the setting. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were four actions from the previous report which received an inadequate judgement. There were three actions for care and one for education. The care actions were to ensure there are clearly defined procedures for emergency evacuation in the event of a fire. Regular fire drills are carried out and a written record kept of the staff and children that took part, dated and time recorded, thus promoting children's safety. The second action was to ensure all areas are safe for children to play in. A free standing radiator has now been removed from the downstairs room and staff have carried out a risk assessment. However, a recommendation remains from this inspection about safety regarding sleeping babies in travel cots on the landing area. The final care action was to ensure there are effective procedures in place for checking that staff are suitable to work with children. All staff hold a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosure and information is held about each staff member in their files, thus ensuring children are cared for in a safe environment.

The one action for the nursery education was to implement a method of planning to provide children with a balanced curriculum, using children's next steps in their development to inform planning. The group now receive support from the Early Years Advisory Teacher and are in the process of developing a secure method of observation, assessment and planning. This remains a recommendation from this inspection.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection 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.

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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):

- ensure the sleeping area for babies is made safe upstairs

- extend opportunities for children to gain an understanding about diversity and disabilities

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):

- continue to develop a system of planning to ensure all children's needs are being met
- use observations to form a system of assessment to monitor children's progress towards the Early Learning Goals

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