



Pipsqueaks

Inspection report for early years provision

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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 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. It operates from two rooms in a single storey building, in Queenborough, on the Isle of Sheppey. Children have access to a fully enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery serves the local area.

A maximum of 32 children aged from 2 to under 5 years may attend the setting at

any one time. The nursery opens 5 days a week all year round. Sessions are from 07.00 until 19.00.

There are currently 23 children from 2 years to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 14 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery has experience of caring for children with special needs.

The nursery employs six staff. Of these, five members of the staff team, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications to NVQ level II or III.

The setting receives support from a mentor from the Local Authority and it is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

Systems for promoting children's health throughout the setting are inadequate, and hygiene procedures are not systematically promoted. For example, children do not learn about good hygiene and the importance of reducing the spread of germs because they do not systematically wash their hands before eating and the environment is not cleaned properly. Procedures for reducing the risk of cross infection are compromised, because staff are not vigilant about hygiene and children share communal towels after hand washing. Many of the toys and resources are grubby and worn. Some younger children mouth toys, which are not clean, and there are no systematic procedures in place to ensure toys are washed regularly. As a result, children's health is compromised.

Meals and snacks are generally balanced and nutritious, however children are not provided with sufficient quantities of food throughout the day to ensure they are well nourished. For example, the nursery operates from 07.00 until 19.00 and children arriving after 08.00 are provided with 2 light snacks of fruit or a biscuit, in addition to a cooked lunch and dessert at midday. Fresh drinking water is not available to children at all times. They are not offered drinks upon return from visits to the park or following active play. Consequently, children are not able to learn the importance of keeping their bodies hydrated. Only sugar free squash is provided at snack time and after lunch. Milk is not offered as an option, reducing opportunities for children to exercise their preferences. Food is not always stored appropriately, for example, food is left uncovered in the refrigerator. Consequently, children's health is compromised.

Although details of any children's special dietary requirements, preferences or food allergies are recorded, these details are not collated to ensure that all staff are fully informed of symptoms. Procedures for administering creams and medicines are not consistently implemented. For example, parents are asked to provide sun cream for their children. However, the nursery also provides its own sun cream, which is applied to children without any written consent from parents, without systems in place to ensure children are not allergic to this product. Procedures for recording the administration of medication are not clear and records do not identify whether

medication has in fact been administered. Consequently, children's health and safety is placed at risk.

Children receive insufficient opportunities to recognise or learn the importance of being healthy and about changes that occur in their bodies. Opportunities for children to participate in vigorous physical exercise are not sufficient as staff do not plan enough activities to promote these skills and do not maximise the use of available resources.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Systems to monitor the safe arrival and departure of children are not secure because, although details of adults authorised to collect children are in place, the list of secure passwords are displayed on the wall in the nursery for anyone to access. As a result, children's safety is compromised.

The procedures the setting follows when going on outings are well thought out and implemented fully. For example, staff carry with them a small red backpack, which includes first aid resources, emergency contact details and a mobile phone, and the ratio of staff to children is higher. However, overall, the monitoring of safety of the setting indoors relies on informal systems for identifying potential hazards to children. This is not adequate as, on occasions when risks are identified, they are not acted upon. For example, tins of household paint and a freestanding radiator are stored in the dining room where children eat their meals and participate in some activities. In addition, children are not being provided with suitable facilities to enable them to sleep/rest peacefully or undisturbed, and clean bed linen is not provided.

Systems for preparing food and monitoring the temperature of cooked food are in place and details recorded appropriately. Staff involved in the preparation and serving of food hold valid food hygiene certificates. However, procedures to ensure children cannot access the kitchen while food is being cooked are compromised as the gate, which should prevent children from entering the kitchen, is left open and children can access this area on their way to the bathroom, unnoticed by staff.

Most staff hold valid paediatric first aid certificates and there is a well-stocked first aid box. Therefore, in the event of an accident or emergency staff are able to take prompt action. Procedures for recording accidents are implemented and most are maintained correctly. However, procedures for ensuring staff who are not vetted do not have unsupervised access to children are inadequate, because staff are not vigilant or deployed effectively. As a result, children are not adequately protected.

Fire drills are undertaken periodically, however details of the practice is not cross-referenced to the register of attendance. As a result, not all children are regularly involved in the emergency evacuation practice and in the event of a fire, their safety may be compromised.

The owner takes lead responsibility for child protection and some staff have undertaken training. However, many staff do not have a sound knowledge and

understanding of child protection issues, do not have up to date knowledge of procedures and are unsure of the policy relating to allegations made against staff. As a result, systems for protecting children from harm are inadequate.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is inadequate.

Children are cared for in a family group and all staff are involved in the care and education of all children. Relationships between staff and children continue to evolve, whereby children approach the staff with ease and staff praise the children. However, the poor organisation, lack of accessible resources and pace of the routine, results in children being left under stimulated and without support. Although staff sit with the children at their level, they do not provide sufficient opportunities to enable the younger children to develop their language and build on their existing skills. Resources that stimulate the senses, such as messy play, are not consistently provided or planned with a purpose. With encouragement, children are beginning to develop their concentration; however, this is hindered by the lack of purposeful activities and developmentally inappropriate resources.

Lack of motivation amongst the staff and poor leadership and management within the setting, impacts on the service provided for the children. Although some planning is undertaken, staff are not yet using the Birth to three matters framework to support the planning for younger children. As a result, children are not provided with sufficient opportunities to promote all areas of their development. For example, activities are not planned and unrealistic expectations of achievements from staff means children are provided with activities that are too difficult and pose a risk to their safety. The environment is not carefully prepared, staff are not organised in their approach and there are gaps in the range of resources provided. Consequently, children cannot freely access a broad and balanced range of toys/activities and on occasions, children leave activities prematurely because they are unsupported or bored. Toys are unorganised, grubby and poorly presented. Many toys are stored out of children's reach and on occasions when children do ask for resources they are often refused them. This impacts on the choices children make, hinders their ability to play freely and does not ensure they are actively involved in activities to support all areas of development and learning. Assessments and observations are not undertaken and development records are not used to monitor children's progress. Consequently, staff are unable to identify and monitor children's development and next steps in learning.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate.

The poor organisation of the setting and lack of expertise amongst the staff working with the funded children affects their personal, social and emotional development. For example, the children generally arrive happily, however, their behaviour deteriorates quickly and they become unsettled. The lack of organisation, structure and proper planning, results in children receiving insufficient challenge in the activities they chose. Consequently, children's behaviour is erratic and on occasions dangerous, for example, throwing books and running around the room. Children

speak openly and confidently with adults and peers, however, they receive insufficient opportunities to sing nursery rhymes, building up a repertoire of songs. There are insufficient opportunities for children to attempt writing for different purposes, develop language for thinking and link sounds to letters. Children clearly enjoy listening to stories and are able to describe with animation their favourite story and the author of this book. However, children do not visit the book corner independently and the environment does not reflect the importance of language, for example through signs, notices and labels. Opportunities for children to develop an understanding of simple problem solving and calculating through practical activities are not planned for and there are insufficient opportunities for children to recognise and recreate simple patterns, or recognise and compare shape, size, position and quantity. Opportunities for children to develop their skills in designing and making are not encouraged or extended, because resources are not accessible regularly. Children move around freely, displaying a good awareness of themselves and others. However, they are not afforded consistent opportunities to build on the development of their fine motor skills. For example, access to construction toys, one-handed tools or malleable materials are not consistently available.

Opportunities for children to develop their gross motor skills are hindered because garden resources are not sufficiently challenging and there are no planned opportunities for children to participate in activities such as twirling, dancing and balancing. Opportunities for children to express and communicate ideas in role-play are hindered by poor planning and organisation. The home corner lacks resources and is uninviting to children. Children do not receive regular planned opportunities to use their imagination in art, design and music. As a result, their creativity is stifled.

Staff's limited knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage impacts on the quality of education provided for children. The curriculum is not structured; as a result, it is ineffective. Staff fail to plan purposeful activities that provide opportunities for teaching both inside and outdoors. Opportunities for children to engage in activities that they can initiate themselves with appropriate intervention by staff are limited. Consequently, children are not consistently engaged in the learning process to help them make progress along the stepping-stones. Staff are generally unfamiliar with the learning intention of the activities provided, resulting in missed opportunities to move children on to their next stage of learning. Opportunities to arouse children's thinking are missed when staff fail to ask open-ended questions, stimulate their interests, and build on what they already know. Low expectations of children's ability and lack of appropriate assessment results in children receiving insufficient challenge, for example, many resources are developmentally inappropriate and activities are over directed.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is inadequate.

Opportunities for children to learn about differences are inadequate, for example, resources reflecting all areas of diversity are not freely available and information about the wider world is limited to the celebration of festivals. In addition, opportunities for children to revisit or recall these celebrations are not available, for

example, through the use of displays, photographs or books. Opportunities for children to develop independence is limited, because activities are often over directed and children are not encouraged to select from the range of available resources. Activities are not adapted to meet the needs of individual children and staff have low expectations of children's abilities. As a result, children are not afforded sufficient opportunities to build on what they know and extend their learning. Although some attention is given to implementing the routines of the younger children, staff have expectations that all children will be able to participate in all activities at the same level. Staff do not differentiate to ensure the needs of all children are considered. As a result, children's individual needs and preferences are not consistently met.

A strong commitment to integrate children with special educational needs is evident and the special needs co-ordinator works with staff, ensuring individual educational plans are implemented. Staff continue to develop their knowledge and understanding in this area.

Children do not receive sufficient support to learn about the rules and boundaries expected of them in the setting, because the daily routine is not consistently implemented. The poor organisation and pace of the session, results in children not being afforded access to a broad range of activities that stimulate their interests. As a result, children's behaviour is erratic and they display unwanted behaviour. Staff are aware of the procedures for managing unwanted behaviour. However, current procedures do not take account of children's individual ages and stages of development. As a result, some strategies implemented are not appropriate.

Partnership with parents is inadequate. The exchange of information throughout the setting is not consistent, and information shared with parents of children who receive nursery education is inadequate. Children do not benefit from a two way sharing of information between parents and staff to enhance their learning. A key worker system is in place, but not all parents are aware of their child's key worker and many parents do not know what records are maintained on their children. Parents are unfamiliar with the nursery policies and procedures. For example, parents are unsure of what action the nursery would take if a child were lost or if there were child protection concerns about their child.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

The provision does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Poor organisation of the setting results in children not receiving a broad and balanced range of opportunities to meet their individual needs and promote their learning. Systems for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating practice throughout the nursery are not implemented. As a result, staff lack motivation and fail to offer good quality care and education. Overall, the lack of guidance and support from the management means the staff's knowledge and understanding of the National

Standards is insecure, they lack initiative and fail to meet the needs of the children. The daily routine and organisation of the environment, does not afford children opportunities to access freely a full range of interesting and stimulating activities to develop their creativity and support their learning. As a result, the environment is not conducive to the needs of the children being cared for, which has an adverse impact on children's behaviour and self-esteem.

Most of the staff working in the setting are qualified and they demonstrate a strong commitment to improve the quality of care and education provided within the setting. However, the induction procedure for staff is poor. For example, there are no systems in place to monitor staff practice and their understanding of the group's policies and procedures. Because of this, staff are not able to implement policies and procedures fully. Not all mandatory documentation and consent forms are in place or completed correctly. There are gaps in staff records and systems are not adequate to protect children from adults who have not been vetted. Consequently, outcomes to promote children's welfare, care and learning are inadequate.

Leadership and management is inadequate. There are no formal systems in place for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of the nursery education within the setting. Consequently, children do not receive a well-organised and balanced curriculum. The staff working with funded children lack a clear understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. The manager does not provide sufficient guidance or support to staff for planning a broad and balanced range of learning opportunities that help move children on to their next steps in learning. The poor organisation of the setting and lack of expertise amongst the staff team impacts on the programme of activities provided. Systems to evaluate children's progress are not effective. Consequently, children's learning is inadequate.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection, the provider agreed to write a procedure to be followed in the event of a child being lost, record the actual times of arrival and departure of children and to ensure suitable procedures for daily outings to local open spaces were in place. The provider has made satisfactory progress in addressing these issues, to help keep the children safe.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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 inadequate - notice of action to improve.

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 that all adults who have unsupervised access to children are suitable to do so and that staff deploy themselves effectively and are vigilant at all times
- develop and implement appropriate systems of planning and assessment for children under 3 years by use of the Birth to three matters framework and ensure all children are provided with a balanced range of activities that are appropriate to their ages and stages of development
- develop systems to monitor the standard of cleanliness throughout the nursery including toys, resources and furnishings and provide hygienic hand drying facilities, to promote good hygiene
- ensure children are able to access fresh drinking water throughout the day and are provided with sufficient meals, snacks and drinks throughout the day that are nourishing and healthy
- develop an appropriate partnership with parents by sharing information relating to the care and education of their children
- develop staff knowledge and understanding of issues relating to child protection and update their knowledge of policies, including procedures to follow in the event of allegations made against staff.

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:

- improve staff knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and how young children learn
- implement rigorous systems for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating practice to improve the quality of the nursery education
- plan a range of activities to promote progress towards all areas of learning

that interest and challenge the children to build on their existing skills and knowledge.

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 *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk