



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 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. It operates from two rooms in a single storey building, in Queenborough, on the Isle of Sheppey. A maximum of 32 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07:00 until 19:00, all year round. All children have access to a small outdoor play area.

There are currently 25 children aged 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 three staff. Of these, two 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 good.

Children gain personal independence and follow hygiene routines such as washing their hands after visiting the toilet, after having their nappy changed and before eating. Practitioners take steps to prevent the spread of infection by keeping the premises clean, wearing gloves when changing nappies and use disinfectant to clean the nappy changing area. Children's health is promoted because practitioners have relevant first aid training and know how to deal with accidents and the administration of medication, although parents do not give written consent for the staff to administer the medication. Children who are infectious do not attend the setting, thus preventing the spread of contagious ailments.

Children make choices when choosing their snacks and are offered a variety of healthy options, such as yoghurts and fresh fruit alongside biscuits. Children are able to be independent pouring their drinks and choosing from water or milk. They are familiar with the routine and enjoy the social occasions that meal and snack times offer, talking to the practitioners and their peers. Menus are displayed for parents and offer a balanced diet taking into account children's food preferences and any dietary needs they may have. Drinking water is available at all times for children to help themselves.

Children have regular opportunities to use large play equipment developing their co-ordination, with many children making good progress in this area. They learn skills of balance, pedal and steer the tricycles and climb steps to reach the top of the wooden box and the bridge. The parachute offers children the opportunity to move their bodies in different ways and they enjoy working in a large group keeping the balls bouncing on the top. Physical activities sometimes take place outside when the weather is dry, such as walks to the beach, local field and areas in the locality such as library or shops. The setting has very limited play space outside, but makes creative use of what is available using a variety of resources, such as tyres, wood, buckets and paint brushes with water.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a safe environment, with room to move around freely. They enjoy

opportunities to safely and easily select activities for different areas of play, such as the role play area, book corner and creative area. Children play mainly on the floor, with the occasional table for some activities. Children are able to freely access the activities and equipment, although some resources like dressing-up clothes are piled in a box and therefore do not look inviting. Equipment and resources are clean and suitable for the age and development of the children attending, although the paints had not been cleaned from the day before, which resulted in all colours looking the same. Consequently, children did not attempt to use them.

Children play in a safe environment, because practitioners carry out daily risk assessments on the premises, although occasionally staff become complacent about the kitchen area, by not keeping the stair gate and door closed, thus compromising children's safety. Children benefit from regular fire drills, enabling them to learn the procedures should an emergency situation arise. There is a safe arrival and collection procedure in place to maintain children's safety at all times, using an intercom, buzzer and password system. Children have opportunities for outside play on the premises and on outings to places within walking distance or on coach journeys. Staff carry out risk assessments and have a sound policy and procedure in place.

Staff have a secure understanding of child protection and know how to implement local child protection procedures if any concerns arise. Practitioners make each other aware if they have to leave the premises. A policy is in place to keep parents and staff informed and ensure children's safety is paramount.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and thoroughly enjoy their time at nursery. They arrive confidently and make their own decisions about the activities they wish to play with from the selection the practitioners make available around the room. Children benefit from the small numbers attending and begin to form good relationships with each other and the staff. However, younger children are not always meaningfully engaged in activities, due to staff deployment at occasions throughout the session, which results in children becoming boisterous and disturbing older children.

Children benefit from a well thought out snack time, where they are able to develop their personal independence choosing snacks and helping themselves. They pour their drinks and enjoy the social occasion with the staff and their peers. Children gain an understanding about saying 'please' and 'thank you' and remind their friends if they forget.

Children's attitude to learning is mostly positive. They approach activities with confidence and show good concentration on self-chosen activities, such as puzzles and the train track. Young children benefit from working alongside the older children, but on occasions this prevents the older children from extending their learning, through the deployment of staff. For example, during a planting activity younger children demanded the attention of the member of staff by standing up and wanting their turn, which resulted in the group losing focus and the more able children having

their turn and leaving the activity. Staff are beginning to plan using the Birth to three matters framework, but are not linking this alongside the Foundation Stage and therefore missing opportunities to extend the more able child and meet the needs of the younger ones.

Nursery Education

Children involve themselves in their experiences and respond confidently to the opportunities the routine provides allowing them to make choices about where they want to play. They show interest in adult-led activities, such as the junk modelling and the parachute, and are keen to become fully involved in the group. Staff are developing their planning system, which includes the Birth to three matters framework. However, plans are not developed sufficiently to provide a balanced curriculum in all areas of learning and therefore children make weak progress in their mathematical and language and literacy development.

Children gain personal independence skills during snack time, pouring their drinks and helping themselves to their chosen snack. They are able to visit the toilet independently and gain confidence in their self-care skills, such as putting on an apron for messy play. Children show good concentration during adult-led and self-chosen activities and build their self-esteem through building good relationships with the staff and their peers. Children communicate effectively with staff and contribute to group discussions and enjoy participating in story sessions, especially when using the puppets. However, children spend little time looking at books independently and there are very few opportunities for children to develop their reading skills, through recognition of familiar words, sounds and letters, other than their name on their apple shape, recording attendance. Staff miss opportunities to discuss and extend children's learning in everyday routines, such as using the label of empty food packets during junk modelling, to gain an understanding that print carries meaning.

Children enjoy using the computer and recognize how it works. A range of learning programmes help them to develop an understanding of size and shape to support their mathematical development. This area promotes lots of interest from children who take it in turns to put the headphones on. Adult support for this activity is good and therefore children become more independent. Children use a range of natural materials, such as sand and water and enjoy using peat to plant some seeds. Opportunities to learn about different cultures and beliefs are through planned activities but there are limited resources to reflect this as an ongoing experience.

Children count confidently with adult help and are beginning to use mathematical language in their play, such as 'I did the biggest jump' and are beginning to make comparisons in size, colour and shape during sorting activities. Children enjoy playing games such as dominoes to support their number counting, but have few opportunities to use numbers in practical situations, see the written number or complete number problems in routine activities, such as snack time because staff are ineffective in their questioning skills.

Opportunities for physical and creative play are regularly changed to provide interesting and challenging activities. Children use a variety of tools, such as scissors

and pencils, developing their hand/eye co-ordination and some children are beginning to write letters of their name with control. Children are keen to participate in the role play area which is linked to the months topic, which is 'farm animals' and is made into a veterinary surgery. They dress up and act out caring for the animals, but their play is not extended due to the lack of adult intervention. Children use their imagination using paints, collage materials and junk models creating their own end product.

Staff plan a satisfactory range of activities and experiences linked to the monthly topic, but fail to link children's next steps to activities, which results in children not expanding their knowledge or skills. A planning system is being developed, including Birth to three matters framework, but as yet, observations of children's learning are not being used to plan their next steps to inform future planning. This results in some areas of learning not be sufficiently planned for. Staff fail to make effective use of incidental opportunities across the session to consolidate and extend children's learning and progress.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children acknowledge their own culture through participation in celebrations, such as Christmas and Easter. They learn about different cultures and festivals through planned activities and some resources, such as books, puzzles and dolls. Staff have a good understanding about children's individual needs and their home circumstances which ensures they offer children care to meet their individual needs, whilst respecting parental requests.

Children with special educational needs are recognised and well supported in the setting. Children receive good individual attention and all staff are aware of their needs. Children are allocated a key-worker when they first attend and observations recorded in a contact book, to enable the parents, staff and outside agencies to develop an educational plan to meet the child's special needs.

Children behave well, the majority of the time. Occasionally, they become boisterous, when staff have not changed the activities and children are not being challenged or the activities are not suitable for a small group of children. Staff are quick to act and encourage children to choose a new activity from the cupboard or find something physical to occupy them. Children benefit from positive reinforcement from the staff and are reminded of the simple rules of the setting. Children learn to care for each other, take turns and share the resources. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Parents receive detailed information about the nursery, which includes some information on the foundation stage curriculum and Birth to three matters framework. They receive regular newsletters detailing the activities their child has been doing and how these can be extended at home. Parents are invited into the group to share their skills and knowledge, enabling them to be involved in their child's learning. Children's individual progress and achievements are recorded in a report and sent home twice a year, to keep parents informed. Parents are generally pleased with the

service they receive and are able to verbally communicate with their child's key-worker without appointment.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The premises are bright and welcoming making children feel secure and comfortable. There are clear routines which are consistently used by all the staff, promoting a sense of familiarity amongst the children. There are occasions when children are not fully engaged in activities, because staff are deployed in other areas, or the activities have become monotonous. However, children do enjoy their play and are happy to come into the setting. Staff work well as a team and support each other throughout the day. The relaxed atmosphere allows children to gain a sense of belonging, because staff are caring and understand their personal needs. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Staff are supported by the management, but the small staff team, namely three people, including the owner, means everyone takes an active role in the activities on offer. Staff are encouraged to do additional training and are motivated to learn, but effective systems to monitor the educational provision are not yet in place, which results in the management trying to work alongside the children, in addition to supporting the staff. The lack of formal planning results in some areas not being given adequate input and impacts on the learning of the children.

The management are actively seeking ways to improve the planning and the recent introduction of the system to monitor children's achievements and record under the six areas of learning has helped staff use the Foundation Stage more effectively. However, systems to assess children's progress in all areas and to monitor and evaluate the learning programme to ensure all aspects of the curriculum are sufficiently covered are not in place. As a result, some aspects of the curriculum do not feature regularly enough, insufficient challenge is provided to some children and many missed learning opportunities across the session go unnoticed.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the nursery were asked to address six actions regarding care issues in the group. All adults that are employed at the premises now hold Criminal Records Bureau disclosures and staff deploy themselves to ensure children are never left unsupervised with un-vetted individuals. Children's safety is now protected because staff have a fair understanding of issues relating to child protection and have renewed the policy. The partnership with parents has vastly improved and parents have access to all the policies and procedures for the setting. They receive regular newsletters informing them of activities they can extend at home to help their children. Children have access to drinking water at all times of the day and are able to independently pour their own drinks. They have regular meals and snacks throughout the day with choices of healthy options. Staff are responsible for the cleaning and have developed daily, assessment sheets to ensure risk assessments are carried out and areas are cleaned on a regular basis. Finally an action regarding

the planning and assessment for children under 3 years has been implemented and is still ongoing, until staff become confident in using the framework.

The nursery also had three actions regarding the education of the children. These three actions are ongoing from this inspection, but staff have made progress in all three areas and the activities and opportunities for children have improved. Staff are becoming familiar with the foundation stage curriculum and regularly discuss this with the management. Systems for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the practice is being developed and implemented with the advice and support from the Early years advisory teacher. Staff are increasing their knowledge of the Foundation Stage and use it on a regular basis to record children's achievements.

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.

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 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):

- obtain written consent for the administration of medication
- update the complaints policy to include the new regulations and contact details for Ofsted
- increase resources and activities for children to extend their learning and understanding of diversity in society

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):

- ensure children are offered daily opportunities to develop their skills in solving mathematical problems, learn to recognize numbers and use them for a purpose
- increase opportunities for children to develop their language and literacy skills in routine and planned activities, gaining an understanding that print carries meaning and begin to link sounds and letters
- continue to develop a planning system that provides children with a balanced curriculum, building on their existing skills and showing differentiation for different groups of children.

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