



# Playful Penguins Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	154412
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<b>Registered person</b>	Thanet Early Years Project LTD
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Sessional 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 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?

Playful Penguins Pre-school is one of seven settings run by Thanet Early Years Project LTD. It opened in 2000 and operates from a hall within the Cliftonville Community Centre in Margate. The pre-school has access to one room, integral toilets, a kitchen and small enclosed outdoor play area. A maximum of 20 children may attend at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.30 to 12.00 and 13.00 to 15.30, term time only.

There are currently 30 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 14 children receive funding for nursery education. Children who attend the group live in the local area. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs five staff. Of these, four of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. One staff member is working towards a qualification.

The group receives support from the Local Authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn about health and hygiene through the daily routine; for example, they wash their hands after using the toilet, before they eat and after messy play. Staff consistently remind them and they know they must wash their hands; however, staff do not routinely talk to them about why. There is liquid soap and paper towels to help prevent the spread of infection and staff use appropriate practices to promote hygiene. The nursery is cleaned daily. Staff have a system in place to ensure this is done to a satisfactory standard for the health and well-being of the children. Staff routinely clean toys and equipment to ensure they are sanitary for the children's play. There is a sick child policy, all regular staff are trained in first aid and there are parental permissions for emergency medical advice and treatment. As a result of these measures, staff are able to act in the children's best interest should they have an accident or become ill. Accident and medication records are in place and maintained appropriately for the children's welfare.

Snacks are provided by the pre-school. A three week menu details a range of healthy snacks to ensure the children do not become hungry; for example, sandwiches and bananas. Children make their own snack whenever possible. Fruit is available everyday. However, staff do not regularly use this time to help children develop an understanding of the reasons for making healthy choices. Information about the children's dietary requirements is posted. Staff are aware of signs and symptoms should a child have a reaction so they can act quickly. Water is available throughout the session which children may access if they are thirsty. Water is taken outside in warmer weather to ensure children remain hydrated.

Children enjoy regular physical play. They can free flow from inside to outside as they choose. A range of activities are available to challenge the children. These include travelling over and under balancing and climbing equipment; for example, one child practiced her balancing skills as she walked across stepping stones she made from logs. In addition, children's large muscles are developed as they scoot or peddle on the 'ride on' toys. Overall, there are sufficient opportunities for children to participate in physical play to practice their developing skills and for their physical well being.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

The nursery is secure so children are safe from unwanted visitors. Staff have an arrival and departure procedure and ensures the children are picked up by appropriate people. Staff confidently challenge anyone unknown to them. There is a system in place for monitoring visitors and a visitors book is generally used. A staff member has the responsibility for health

and safety. She is very aware of the potential for accidents; for example, when the pasta spilled she ensured it was picked up in case a child slipped on it. Risk assessments are regularly completed and generally documented. As a result, children are protected from hazards. Staff have a sound knowledge of child protection to ensure the welfare of children. As a result, they know how to safeguard children and what to do if they are worried about a child's welfare.

Children learn about safety as staff talk to them about safe play; for example, kicking the ball away from where other children are playing. Staff give children animated explanations showing how they could 'bang' or 'bump' others. This helps children develop an understanding of what could happen. Staff are familiar with the evacuation procedure. However, fire drills have been sporadic this year. A lack of documentation makes it difficult to assess if children have all been involved in fire evacuation and are familiar with the procedure. This has potential to cause children panic in the case of a real fire. In addition, the egress route from the play area to the meeting point is not included on the daily risk assessment to ensure safe evacuation.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are welcomed as they arrive at pre-school. The staff use the key worker system very well. As a result, children develop secure relationships with the staff and in turn the staff get to know them well. Use of the Birth to three matters framework is evolving. A record of the children's achievements are kept using observations and photographs. This means that staff are able to assess the children's progress, but the assessments are not used in the planning. Children are able to select from the toys and activities available; however, these are often chosen by the staff. Alternatively, staff get toys out after asking children what they want to play with and making suggestions. This does not promote their independence. Staff support children in their play; encouraging them to participate in a variety of activities. Children become competent learners as they experiment, explore and create with different mediums; for example, they were able to play outside in dry sand and inside in damp sand. They made hills and valleys making noises as they delighted in pushing the cars across the hills. Staff supported their play by saying 'up' and 'down'. Children imitate what they see and hear; for example, they talk on the phone and use a brush and dustpan to sweep. Children are creative with sound as they jingle the wind chimes outside. Their language develops as they begin to enjoy songs and share rhymes.

### **Nursery Education**

Teaching and learning is satisfactory.

Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage. They keep records of the children's achievements using contact books, observations and photographs. However, planning is an overview of what they wish the children to learn as a group. They are not yet using the observations to plan for individual children. In addition, there is no evaluation of activities to help measure success. The challenges set for children are adequate as the key workers know the children well and they adjust the activities on offer to ensure all children are able to participate and are challenged appropriately. However, because activities are not planned much of the learning is incidental. Staff talk to the children about

what they are doing; however, often ask closed questions. There is not enough open-ended questioning to make the children think and express themselves.

Children's listening skills develop as they enjoy activities such as interactive stories and songs. They use speech to talk about real and imagined experiences; for example, they told the dental hygienist about their own experiences at the dentist. Children begin to link sounds to letters through a range of rhymes and stories. They learn that print carries meaning as the environment is labelled and children's words are written on their pictures. Some opportunities for mark making are available through activities such as chalking on a board; however, opportunities to write for a purpose are not available; for example, in the role play area. In addition, although children enjoy stories at group time they are not regular visitors to the book area. Children become familiar with their names as they self register, see their names are on their coat pegs and have a named box for their work. In addition, clapping activities using the children's names teaches them about sounds and amounts as they talk about how many 'beats' are in each of their names. Children show an interest in numbers and counting. They count during the session; for example, at snack time when they find out how many plates are needed. Children's mathematical thinking is fostered as staff use mathematical language such as big and small, up and down. In addition, they learn about capacity as they play in the sand and the water and fill and empty containers.

Children have opportunities to experiment and discover; for example, by using magnets or exploring sinking and floating in the water. Children are encouraged to look closely at differences as they are asked questions such as, is it hard or soft. They construct using bricks, developing their design and making skills. Small world toys help them to learn about the world as they re-visit their own experiences; for example, they play with the cars on a track. Children are introduced to information and communication technology through the use of a computer and play telephones. Outings to local places of interest help children to gain a knowledge and understanding of the local environment. They learn about planting and growing as they are able to dig and plant seeds. Children explore media and materials as they swirl their hands in shaving foam, paint and play in water. They explore what happen next as they use paint, mixing the colours together. Children sing simple songs from memory. They are creative with sound as they access instruments. Children are not frequent visitors to the role play area; although they use their imagination in other areas such as the sand and water. They make hills and tunnels, wash the dolls and share cups of tea; for example, a child filled a cup with sand and passed it to another child who blew it to cool it and pretended to sip it. Children use tools and materials such as spades to dig, construction toys and play dough. These help to develop their small muscle skills.

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

The provision is good.

Children settle well in the pre-school. This is because a settling in procedure allows children to begin attending gradually. In addition, staff work closely with the parents to meet the children's individual needs. Children are learning to cooperate as the staff use positive methods of behaviour management and give clear directions; for example, asking them what is wrong when they are having difficulties and explaining why inappropriate behaviour is unwanted. They use

strategies such as a timer to help children take turns. Children are praised for their achievements. Every achievement is noticed and valued by the staff who become excited and are enthusiastic about each small step. As a result, children have good self esteem. Children are encouraged to take care of the environment; for example, they help to sweep up the sand and tidy the toys. They become independent when they prepare their own snacks such as buttering bread to make sandwiches.

Positive images are reflected in the environment through pictures, books and toys. Others cultures are acknowledged through activities such as food tasting and dressing up. Different languages are reflected in the environment. Special guests are invited into the pre-school; for example, a 'story teller' told children folk tales from around the country and a 'singer' from Sierra Leone visited with tales and songs from other countries. Children with English as an additional language attend the setting. Staff have strategies in place to support them and settle them in. A special educational needs coordinator works with outside agencies and the parents to develop individual educational plans as needed. Children are interested in the activities and their concentration is developing. They are beginning to develop relationships with each other; for example, when arriving at pre-school one child spotted another and ran over to hug him. Children are beginning to share, take turns and play together with the support of the staff. They know the rules; for example, they know they need to fetch an apron before they play in the water or paint. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good.

Parents are greeted warmly. They feel that they can readily approach the staff and manager in the nursery. Questionnaires give parents the opportunity to share their views and the results show they are very happy with the pre-school. A prospectus is available to inform them of the pre-school's policies and procedures. In addition, it contains a statement about the Foundation Stage. Newsletters include ideas for parents at home; for example, how to promote communication, language and literacy and encouraging parents to help their children select and take home pre-school books to read together. This has been successful. Parents are involved in their children's education. There is a form to help assess children's starting points when they enter the nursery. Staff seek parents views on their child's learning mostly through discussion. Contact books are always available for parents review and for their comments. The staff add observations and the key workers detail next steps so that the parents are aware of their children's progress. They know they can view their children's records at any time. Parents talk to staff daily and meetings are held each term to talk about their children's achievements. As a result, parents are informed of their children's progress.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. The routine is organised to include a range of activities. The session begins with a group time; activities such as interactive stories and songs capture the children's interest. However, parts of the group time are mundane; for example, when they do routine tasks such as day and date. The majority of the day children can choose what they do and snack time is an integral part of the time so it does not interrupt play. Children may free flow to the outside area as they wish. There are

recruiting procedures to ensure staff are suitable to work with the children. The complaints procedure has been updated to meet new legislation. The majority of the required documentation for the safe and effective management of the setting and for the welfare and care of children is maintained and stored securely. However, during inspection the register was not updated when a child came in late, which is an issue for accountability and safety. In addition, one child's file was updated during inspection as all the necessary permissions had not been signed.

Leadership and management is satisfactory.

The manager is very positive and is keen to make improvements. Staff meet together regularly and work well as a team. Staff deploy well for the children's safety; however, they are not deploying to areas such as the book area or the role play area which remained unused during inspection. The nursery education programme is evaluated informally and several weaknesses discussed with manager have already been identified by the staffing team. However, not all weaknesses have been addressed as of yet. In addition, the manager has not developed clear systems to evaluate the effectiveness of staff deployment, the planning and the activities provided. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities and have the opportunity for professional development. Staff attending training classes, share what they have learnt to benefit the other staff and improve practice; for example, a staff member attending 'wellbeing and involvement' training is regularly sharing and discussing what she has learnt.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection there were seven key issues identified for nursery education and six recommendations relating to care. Since this inspection there has been a complete change of staff in the setting.

The key issues for nursery education were to; develop staffs knowledge and understanding of the stepping stones within the early learning goals across the six areas of learning; to improve the organisation of the setting; to improve the use of assessment in order to i) identify children's next steps in learning and ii) use the information gained to inform the planning of activities; to improve the support given to children with English as an additional language; to develop the leadership and management of the setting in order to support staff with the care and education they provide to children; to provide parents with information about the educational programme and their children's progress towards the early learning goals and to link children's individual educational plans to the stepping stones.

The staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the stepping stones, as a result, they know how young children learn and set up the environment accordingly. The session is organised so there is minimum disruption to the children's play. The staff assess the children's progress and their next steps; however, the assessments have not yet been used effectively to inform the planning, therefore, this remains a recommendation of this inspection. Children with English as an additional language are supported to ensure they settle well and make progress. Staff work extremely well together as a team and supported by upper management are beginning to make improvements in the setting. Staff work closely with the parents; as a result, they are informed of their children's progress. Children's individual educational plans are linked to the stepping stones in their assessment records, this enables staff to monitor their progress.

The recommendations for care were to; conduct a risk assessment on the premises identifying actions to be taken to minimize identified risks; develop a procedure to ensure that all accident records are signed by the parent; develop staffs knowledge and understanding of the operational plan; provide opportunities for parents to receive regular information about the provision and their children's progress; to re-organise circle time and to request written permission from all parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment.

Staff conduct regular risk assessments to ensure children can move safely in the setting. All accidents records are now signed by the parents for the wellbeing of the children. Staff are knowledgeable about the operational plan and know the policies and procedures to ensure the children's safety. Parents receive information about their children's care through daily discussion, contact books and newsletters. Circle time is short and mostly interactive to capture the children's interests. Written parental permission is requested for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment so children can be appropriately cared for in the event of an emergency.

### **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.

## **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):

- ensure that all children receive regular opportunities to participate in emergency evacuation procedures and that staff regularly risk assess the evacuation route
- ensure the daily attendance record is accurate at all times
- ensure the necessary paper work is in place in order to care for children prior to them starting pre-school, including all parental permissions.



## **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):

- develop the planning so that the children's assessments and observations are used to inform the planning of activities (this includes Birth to three matters)
- increase opportunities for children to mark make and write for a purpose, ensure staff deploy effectively to encourage children to be more frequent visitors to the book area to develop an enjoyment of books
- develop the staff's use of effective questioning to allow the children to think and develop their language skills (this includes Birth to three matters)
- develop clear systems to evaluate the effectiveness of staff deployment, the planning and the activities provided.

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