

Portico Lodge

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY222717
Inspection date	19 July 2007
Inspector	Chris Scully
Setting Address	Portico Lane, Eccelston Park, St Helens, Merseyside, L35 7JS
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Registered person	Nicole Politis & Savas Politis
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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Portico Lodge Nursery registered in 2002. The setting is one of two nurseries owned and managed by a limited company. The nursery is situated within a refurbished residential property in the Eccleston Park area of St. Helens. A maximum of 30 children may attend at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 all year round. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 56 children aged from birth to five years on roll. Of these, 10 children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties or disabilities. The setting is able to provide support to children for whom English is an additional language.

The nursery employs 10 members of staff. Of these, nine hold appropriate early years qualifications. There is one member of staff working towards a qualification and four members of staff are working towards an additional qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean environment. They are developing an understanding of the need for good hygiene practices, as they wash their hands after going to the toilet and before meals. Older children confidently remind their friends to wash their hands and flush the chain after going to the bathroom. Staff are positive role models to children, as they too wash their hands at appropriate times during the day. All children are encouraged to clean their teeth after lunch in order to further promote their health. Appropriate nappy changing procedures, which meet the individual needs of the children, are in place. However, the current systems for the disposal of soiled nappies are not effective and do not minimise the risk of cross infection to children.

A number of staff are trained in first aid. This means children receive appropriate care and attention should they injure themselves at the nursery. Children who become unwell at the nursery are provided with appropriate care. This is supported by the sick child policy, which means staff are able to contact parents quickly to alert them to the situation. Staff are informed of the individual medical needs of the children and generally meet these well. However, on a small number of occasions they have not gained written consent before administering medication.

Children's physical development is progressing appropriately. Children are confident to use a wide range of large resources within the outdoor area. Older children are very skilled at using a range of wheeled resources and climbing frames. As a result of this they are not effectively challenged outside. Younger children show increasing control when using small resources, such as crayons. Babies have sufficient space and resources to enable them to practice their rolling, crawling and walking skills. All children have suitable opportunities to sleep or rest according to their individual needs. Bedding and face cloths are regularly laundered, which effectively minimises the risk of cross infection.

All children enjoy a healthy and nutritious diet. All meals are home-made and are freshly prepared by the cook. The staff and cook are aware of the children's individual dietary needs and meet these well in practice. Records relating to the children's needs are held within the kitchen in order to support this. Children have access to fresh drinking water throughout the day to keep themselves refreshed, although, they are not always able to independently access this. The needs of babies are met well by the staff. Detailed information is held about their individual dietary needs, and this is reviewed on a regular basis with the parents. This ensures continuity of care and ensures their needs are met. All children enjoy a relaxed social occasion at meal times as they are able to sit with their friends and talk about the morning's events.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a warm, welcoming environment. They have sufficient space in which to play. Children are confident in their surroundings and happily self-select their resources from a selection of low-level storage systems. This means they are able to become engaged in purposeful play and learning activities. Children's art work is attractively displayed around the setting, which successfully promotes their self-esteem, as their work is valued by staff. Children are able to access a wide range of resources, which are suitable for their ages and stages of

development, and are safe and well maintained. There are some resources depicting diversity within the setting.

Most risks have been identified and minimised, however, some issues, such as an uncovered socket and trailing wires have not been addressed. Additionally, a problem with vandals has resulted in fence panels being damaged. The wooden panels are being replaced with concrete panels and posts. However, at the time of the inspection one panel had not been replaced due to poor weather conditions. Also for a short period of time insufficient staff were directly supervising children in the garden, which impacts upon the children's safety. Children are developing a secure understanding of the need to keep themselves safe. They confidently tell visitors that they must walk by the wall when going into the garden and to hold the banister rail when coming downstairs, as 'you don't want to fall.' Children's safety is appropriately maintained when on outings. Staff conduct effective risk assessments of outings and ensure they have a mobile phone, first aider and the children's details with them in case of emergency. Fire detection equipment is in place and is checked regularly to ensure it is in good working order. Regular fire drills are carried out, which means children are developing an understanding of how to evacuate the building in an emergency. Topic work on road safety and safety outdoors enhances the children's understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

Staff have a sound understanding of child protection issues. The child protection coordinator has attended a variety of child protection training and has shared this with the staff. A number of staff have also attended training courses to enhance their understanding of this subject. Children are protected from harm due to the implementation of the child protection policy, which conforms to the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidance. This means staff are aware of the procedures to follow should they have a concern about a child's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled. They enter eagerly and are quickly absorbed in self chosen play activities. This is due to the warm, caring relationships staff build with the children, which enables them to feel safe and secure in their care. Clear planning systems support the children's development and provide opportunities for them to become engaged in a range of interesting play and learning experiences. Staff have a secure understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and implement this well for younger children. Effective observation systems mean staff are able to chart children's progress and use the information well to plan the next steps in their learning.

Children are confident to ask questions and are keen to talk to visitors about what they are doing. For example, they talk animatedly about the laptop and eagerly explain that they have one at home. Children listen well to stories and enthusiastically join in with their favourite ones, such as 'The Monkey Puzzle,' by joining in with the repetitive phrase. Care of babies is good. All babies have a secure bond with their carer and will seek them out if they are distressed or feel insecure, for example, when visitors are present. They are offered words of comfort, which means they are quickly reassured and are able to resume their play. Babies enjoy the opportunities to explore real and natural materials. They giggle in delight as they wrap the feather boa around themselves; others gaze in wonder at the paper weight and various shells.

Children are confident to practise their mark making skills in various ways around the setting. Toddlers enjoy the opportunities to use crayons to create their masterpieces, whilst older children are very keen to use 'squeezezy' bottles outdoors to make patterns on the paving flags.

Children's language skills are fostered well by the staff who make effective use of non-verbal communication to enable younger children to make themselves understood. Staff regularly introduce new words to enable the children to extend their vocabulary. Younger children's counting skills are progressing well as they attempt to count themselves before they go outside to play.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. They use this information well to provide a wide range of interesting activities to all children. Plans are effectively organised to meet the diverse needs and abilities of the children attending and clearly demonstrate the learning outcomes for individual children. However, they do not effectively incorporate the outdoor areas, which means some more able children are not always suitably challenged outdoors. Observations and assessment systems are used very well to identify what children know and the next steps in their learning. This information is used exceptionally well to inform the planning, which means children are able to make good progress. The implementation of continuous play provision indoors has enhanced the children's choice and learning opportunities, as they are able to freely select their resources and where to play. This successfully enables the children to become absorbed in play and learning activities, which truly interest them. Staff are skilled at asking open-ended questions, which successfully enable children to think and communicate their ideas. They provide good opportunities for children to revisit activities and learning experiences. For example, they discuss the butterfly from the previous day and ask them to recall the colours, where the butterfly went and the patterns on its wings.

Children are interested and eager learners who enjoy the challenge of new ideas and experiences, such as mark making outdoors with 'squeezezy' bottles. They are very familiar with the daily routines and provide reminders to younger children about what will happen next. They show concern for others who are not in the nursery today and talk fondly about children who have emigrated. They demonstrate an understanding of taking turns and sharing, as they wait patiently for their turn on the bikes. Children are confident in their surroundings and demonstrate good levels of independence, as they see to their own personal needs. Older children are good role models who provide prompts to other children, such as reminding them to wash their hands after going to the toilet. Children's language development is fostered well and the clever weaving of Makaton into everyday conversations enhances the children's understanding of communication. Children are confident to use Makaton when conversing with staff at circle time, as they eagerly demonstrate the letters in their name and the names of others. More able children are able to mark their own work with some creating labels for display work, such as threading, matching and sorting. Children are confident speakers who enthusiastically put forward their thoughts and ideas. For example, when playing in dough children discuss the merits of different sandwich fillings and decide upon which ones they like the best.

Children use a range of mathematical language in everyday conversations, such as taller, bigger and smaller. They are able to count to five and beyond, some with the support of the staff. There are some opportunities for children to solve simple problems, such as more or less than, but this can be sporadic. Children have the opportunities to examine a range of numbers and their meaning within the environment and confidently name a range of shapes, such as circle, rectangle, square and diamond. They are keen to tell visitors about the different shapes in the matching games and clearly explain the rules of the game. Children are developing an understanding of technology as they use a variety of everyday resources. They learn about

directional and positional language when using programmable robots. Children's construction skills are progressing well, they are skilled at using a range of kits and building materials to create their designs. Children notice patterns within the seasons and are developing an understanding of the need to wear specific clothing at different times of the year. This is supported by the staff's use of questioning, such as discussing the importance of sun cream and the type of clothing they should wear today.

Children use their imagination well to create various role play scenarios. They negotiate specific roles with their friends effectively and make decisions about what will happen next. Children are keen to access the creative areas and confidently self-select their resources to create their masterpieces. Children are able to use a variety of art equipment and are well supported by the staff in their play. Children's imagination is effectively supported outdoors as they rush to visitors to tell them that their friends are lost in the woods. They speed away calling that they are to use the map to find them and another child is marking where they go so they do not get lost. Other children use information from the visit by the fire brigade to explain how they are putting out the pretend fire on the tree with the 'squeezezy' bottle, as this is their hose.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff have a secure understanding of the children's individual needs and preferences and meet these well in practice. This is effectively supported by information both written and verbal, which is sourced from parents. All children are fully included in all of the activities provided. Adaptations to activities and some areas of the setting effectively support the needs of all of the children attending. Children are respectful of one another, as they generally listen well to what each other have to say. This is reciprocated by the staff who spend considerable amounts of time talking and interacting with the children, which enables them to feel valued. Children learn about the wider world through various topics throughout the year. This includes exploring various festivals, such as Holi, Diwali, the dragon boat festival and American Independence Day. They are encouraged to learn about their local community through discussion with the staff and by taking part in various charity events. This means children are developing a good understanding of the needs of others. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children are generally well behaved. They listen well to staff and respond appropriately to their requests. They are aware of the need for safe boundaries and are confident to tell visitors that they must walk by the wall as they go out doors. Children are familiar with the daily routines and call out to one another that it is tidy up time as they put their resources away. All children receive high levels of praise from staff for their efforts and achievements, which successfully fosters their self-esteem and self-worth. Children play well with their peers, with younger children developing an understanding of taking turns and sharing. Care of children with learning difficulties or disabilities is good. Children are effectively supported by the Special educational needs coordinator and staff. Effective systems are in place for providing one-to-one support where necessary in order to support the children's play and learning experiences. Clear systems are in place for making the transition from nursery to school, which means children are able to settle into their new environment well.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents are presented with a wealth of clear, well organised information about the setting and the type of care they can expect their child to receive. Written updates are presented to them each month, which enable them to see the progress their child has made and receive information about future activities to support next steps in the children's

learning. This is further supported by regular parents' evenings, which enable parents and staff to meet and discuss the children's progress. Parents are encouraged to support their child's learning by discussing the topics covered and by bringing in items from home. Parents are invited to take part in activities within the nursery, such as the balloon race and leavers barbecue. Parents state they are very happy with the care their children receive. They comment favourably upon the homely atmosphere, professionalism of the staff and the care their children receive. Several state that their children do not always want to come home at the end of the day, as they are having too much fun.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by qualified and experienced staff. All are suitably vetted and inducted, which means they are fully informed of their roles and responsibilities. The setting has effectively delegated specific roles to staff, such as the child protection coordinator, equal opportunities and safety. This means they take the lead with regards to training and ensure everyone is aware of the role they play in implementing them. All staff have equal access to all of the training provided. They are committed to attending courses in order to further enhance the play and learning opportunities offered to the children.

Policies and procedures which contribute to the children's health, safety and well being are in place. These are shared with the parents and are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain effective working tools. Children's attendance is recorded, although, on a few occasions children have not been signed out by the staff. An appropriate complaints procedure is in place, which means parents have sufficient information available to them should they need to discuss any concerns.

The leadership and management is good. Management is committed to the ongoing improvement and development of the educative provision. They have sought advice from the advisory teacher and have made several improvements to the setting following their advice, which has improved upon the opportunities available to the children. Effective systems are in place for evaluating the service provided which enables management and staff to make decisions on how to enhance the provision. Time is provided for staff to plan activities and to attend training courses in order to further enhance their skills and knowledge.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection four recommendations were raised in relation to the care provision. These related to: the induction programme; the medication record; and resources depicting diversity. The setting has improved upon the induction package for staff and now ensures that child protection is included. A record of all medication administered to children is now in place. The nursery has purchased some resources, which depict positive images of race, gender, culture and disability. In addition to these two recommendations were raised regarding the nursery provision with regards to the children's mathematical and creative development. The nursery has extended the opportunities for children to develop their mathematical skills across all areas of the curriculum. Children are able to freely access a wider range of resources and materials in order to support their creative development. In addressing these issues the setting has improved upon the children's learning opportunities, their health and well being.

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 complaint 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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

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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 further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure appropriate systems are in place for the disposal of nappies and consent is sought for each time medication is administered
- ensure all identified risks to children are minimised and that staff are effectively deployed.

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):

- enhance the planning for the outdoor areas in order to enhance the children's learning opportunities and experiences
- provide more opportunities for children to practice their problem solving skills.

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