

Poppetts Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY275826
Inspection date	06 February 2008
Inspector	Sandra Daniels
Setting Address	Long Ridings Avenue, Hutton, Essex, CM13 1DU
Telephone number	01277 264644
E-mail	
Registered person	Poppetts Limited
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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Poppetts Limited is a privately owned childcare centre. It opened in 1997 and operates from a single building in the grounds of Long Ridings Primary School in Brentwood. A maximum of 44 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The centre is open each weekday from 07.45 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All the children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. Poppetts Limited offers full day care, morning and afternoon pre-school sessions, before and after school care and a school holiday scheme.

There are currently 116 children aged under 12 years on roll. Of these, 41 children receive funding for nursery education. Children mostly come from the local community.

The centre employs 23 staff of whom 13, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are four members of staff currently working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a very healthy and hygienic environment. Staff employ thorough routines and procedures to ensure all areas are clean and hygienically maintained at all times, ensuring children are kept healthy. Protective clothing is worn by all staff carrying out food preparation and cooking duties, in addition to those who are changing babies' nappies. Outdoor shoes are not worn in the baby rooms so that the floor remains clean for babies to crawl and sit on. Children understand the need to wash their hands after certain activities. For example, visiting the toilet or after craft activities. This is evidenced as they ask to, and undertake these tasks without prompting, and with staff support as necessary. There are visual prompts in children's bathrooms to remind them to wash their hands and how to do it properly. Children learn about keeping themselves healthy as they engage in physical activities and learn to understand the impact this has on their bodies. An extremely detailed sick child policy and procedure ensures parents and carers are kept fully aware of the group's responsibilities and that children are cared for sensitively and free from infection. Robust documentation is kept in respect of accidents and medication administered, with most staff holding a recognised first aid certificate ensuring any accidents are dealt with competently.

Highly effective hygiene routines and procedures are employed by adults when preparing food. Children enjoy extremely healthy meals, snacks and drinks. Menus are constructed with great consideration for children's nutritional requirements and are constantly under review to suit the needs of the children attending and to comply with the latest information from food experts. For example, there are no mechanically reclaimed meat products provided for children and foods are organically sourced wherever possible. Children learn the importance of healthy eating and have the opportunity to make their own healthy meals. They visited local shops to purchase ingredients for pizzas which they thoroughly enjoyed. They talk about what fruit and food is good for them as they sit at tables in small groups with staff. They confidently say that 'milk makes your bones strong' and that it 'comes from cows, goats and reindeer'. Children independently access freely available drinking water regularly throughout the sessions, further promoting their very good health and overall development. Great care is taken when providing bottle feeds for young babies. Sterilising equipment is readily available and milk is discarded after 45 minutes if it is not used. Babies are always held when being bottle fed, supporting their emotional health and development.

Children's physical development is extremely well provided for. They have daily access to an extensive range of physical play activities. The vibrant and interesting outdoor play space enables children to express themselves and their physical skills exceedingly well. Children competently climb, balance, travel over, under and through when using the outdoor equipment and they skilfully change speed and direction during music and movement time. Children develop confidence when using the variety of equipment offered. Staff are able to skilfully balance the supervision of children and equipment with the need to allow children to take risks in a safe environment and develop skills such as climbing and using balancing equipment. Practitioners make excellent use of the space indoors to provide a vast range of physical activities which further develop children's physical capabilities. Children develop competent small physical skills through access to an extensive range of equipment and activities. They competently use scissors, a computer keyboard and mouse, a variety of craft materials when being creative, writing materials and join together pieces when using the wide variety of construction equipment and jigsaws with dexterity.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in an extremely welcoming environment, which is planned to meet their needs by ensuring the play areas are maintained to an excellent standard. Children display an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe because staff are very committed to ensuring children learn the safe procedures. For example, children understand they must walk not run when moving from one area to another. They actively remind each other to walk and not to run. Children are also extremely helpful when tidy-up time arrives and take responsibility for putting toys and resources away in the appropriate place. All toys, equipment and resources are sourced from reputable suppliers and great care is taken to ensure that they are suitable for the ages and stages of the children using them and that they remain well maintained and in very good condition. When out walking with staff children learn about road safety and this is reinforced by a visit from a 'lollypop' person and role play using road signs and a pedestrian crossing.

The setting has an extremely comprehensive risk assessment in place, which effectively and successfully minimises the risk to children and helps to keep them safe as they play freely. For example, children's accident records are scrutinised regularly to assess any potential hazards which need to be added to the ongoing risk assessment. No children or adults can enter or leave the building unsupervised and everyone signs in and out. The nursery, pre-school and out of school group rooms are very welcoming to parents and children, being enhanced by wonderful examples of children's own work, which is attractively displayed, so encouraging children to feel proud of their achievements. Photographs of children at play also reflect very positively the ethos of the setting. Children delight in talking about their work and are eager to share this with others. Children can enjoy areas for vigorous play and for relaxation. Children and babies thrive in a setting where they can move freely and without restriction as they access play materials and choose activities and resources from those stored within easy reach.

Children's welfare is protected most effectively because staff are extremely clear in their role in child protection and understand their responsibility to contact the named person. Training in relation to safeguarding children forms part of the induction process for every member of staff and several practitioners have also attended further related courses in this area. This ensures that all staff continue to be most vigilant and secure in their knowledge and understanding. The named person is aware of her role and the procedure she must follow should a situation occur that requires a referral to the appropriate agency.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children flourish in the welcoming, relaxed and stimulating environment. They come into the nursery, pre-school and out of school groups enthusiastically and quickly settle into an activity. Children are very happy, confident and are forming excellent relationships. They have access to an extensive variety of interesting and stimulating activities. These are well thought out by staff to encourage children to develop new skills whilst having lots of fun. Staff value and listen to the children's ideas and respond to spontaneous events. For example, an overnight snowfall was swiftly responded to by both children and staff. Snow was collected from the garden and brought inside for the children to observe what happened to it in the warmth of the nursery.

Staff confidently follow the 'Birth to three matters' guidance to provide the children with high quality care and education. Practitioners are extremely sensitive towards children's needs and

recognise the uniqueness of each child. Babies' home routines are followed to ensure continuity of care and to develop their emotional security and resilience. There are highly effective planning and assessment systems in place to ensure the learning programme matches the needs of the individual children. Staff ensure activities are adapted to provide appropriate challenges for children of different ages and abilities and offer children support and guidance when needed. An excellent system of on-going assessment, which includes the use of photos and observations, ensures that activities successfully challenge and interest all of the children. The present theme of 'animals' is successfully used to promote all areas of the children's learning. For example, the children develop their creative skills as they make animal collages for the walls using glue and textured materials. They later have great fun when they have a visit from the 'zoo lab'. They are able to see and touch small animals and reptiles, ask questions and gather information, making their learning a 'real life' experience.

Children attending the out of school group have fun discovering what animal represents their year of birth in the Chinese calendar. They are supported and encouraged by staff to remember or work out the year of their birth. Following this activity children are free to choose from an interesting and diverse range of activities including art and craft activities, using the computer, playing board games or using the pool table.

Children benefit greatly from the highly skilled interaction from the staff. Their expert knowledge of child development and recognition of each child's uniqueness ensures children feel valued, settled and secure. The highly effective planning and assessment systems ensure that children's individual needs are very well met. Children's behaviour is excellent, which is due to the expertise and consistency of approach by staff. Children are regularly praised and encouraged, and are reminded of simple expectations and boundaries, this means that they are increasingly able to manage their own behaviour. Children's self esteem is well nurtured, they respond very well to being a 'special helper' as they give out the drinks at meal time and are rewarded with stickers for kind and helpful behaviour.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are highly motivated due to the activities being exciting and fun and well thought through. Staff expertly adapt individual activities to encourage children to take the next step in their learning. Staff use an innovative range of methods to help children learn, and the sessions are well balanced to allow children to explore and consolidate their learning independently, as well as having opportunities to be involved in small and large adult-led activities.

Staff have an extremely secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum, and have a very good understanding of how children learn and progress. Children are offered an excellent range of exciting activities and rich learning experiences. This includes extensive use of both the indoor and outdoor play space to fully extend their learning. Areas are extremely well presented, to allow children to make independent choices, and to promote their confidence and build self-esteem.

Staff are highly motivated and enthusiastic. They consistently make excellent use of their time to support the children in their learning. Children benefit from the staff's skilful use of questioning. This challenges their thinking and motivates them to achieve as much as they can. Children show a high level of independence as they put on their coats, help themselves to drinks and use the toilets. Children happily put items away in the correct place at tidy up time. They sit attentively during 'circle time' and listen well to the member of staff who encourages

the children to talk about how they feel about certain things, either using sign language or using their voice. Children's personal, social and emotional development is excellent due to the hard work that staff put into meeting the needs of the children.

Children's progress is very well monitored due to the thorough assessments carried out by the staff. These are used to guide future planning to help children make progress and develop new skills. All plans are evaluated, to monitor the success of activities and make sure learning intentions are achieved.

Children are making rapid progress in all areas of learning and highly effective planning ensures an excellent balance of adult-led and child-led activities. This allows children to contribute to their learning and to pursue their interests. Consequently, they are confident, eager to get involved in activities and motivated to learn. They show excellent independence in their personal care, and love to help prepare the snack table for their friends. Children are considerate and caring towards each other. They co-operate very well during small group activities and take turns when playing a game, or passing around the fruit at snack time. They are extremely polite; remembering to say please and thank you. This is due to staff promoting a caring and positive approach and acting as good role-models. Children demonstrate high levels of concentration as they carefully cut out complex shapes using scissors. They demonstrate a positive approach to new experiences as they tentatively put their hand into the 'feely bag' to see what insect they can find.

Children have very good opportunities to link sounds to letters. They find their own names as they sit down for snack time, and some children are able to find their friend's name too. Some children are able to write their names, as demonstrated by a child using magnetic letters. This demonstrates their increasing awareness of words and letters. Children's enjoyment of books and reading is enhanced, as they have free access to a broad range of different types and styles of writing. They are encouraged to understand that print carries meaning, as excellent use is made of writing and text within the environment. For example, children take orders on a note pad as they play in the 'restaurant'. They love joining in with familiar stories and can predict what will happen next when the staff member questions them. Children are extremely good listeners, and follow directions well. Children's spoken language is developing exceptionally well, circle time is successfully used to promote listening and language skills. Each day they talk about the days of the week and observe the changes in the weather as they complete the weather chart. The broad range of topics and activities successfully introduces them to a wide range of new words.

Children count with confidence and use numbers when engaged in a wide range of fun, interesting and practical activities. For example, at circle time, they count how many children are present. At snack time as they help to set the tables, they count how many plates and cups they will need and predict how many more for the remaining table. Children look carefully at shapes during their play and enjoy making complex constructions with bricks. They match and name two dimensional shapes they see, and sort objects according to their colour and size using mathematical language. Children have very good opportunities to independently explore and investigate objects, and show curiosity when using the magnifying glasses to examine natural objects such as leaves and bugs. Children use the computer extremely confidently, and show very good control when using the mouse to follow the programmes. Children make comparisons of the characteristics of different bugs and insects. For example, 'this one can fly and this one has legs to walk.'

Children use their imagination very well through the expertly planned role play experiences provided by staff. For example, they enjoy imaginary play in a hairdresser's, post office, travel agent and doctor's surgery. Children love to make dens using large pieces of material and pretend to be in a tent. They thoroughly enjoy joining in with music and singing familiar action songs. They have excellent opportunities to use a broad range of materials to create their own models and pictures.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are expertly cared for by practitioners who work exceptionally well with parents to meet children's individual needs and ensure they are included fully in the life of the setting. Practitioners demonstrate a very secure awareness of equal opportunities and learning difficulties and/or disabilities ensuring children's individual needs are met and they feel included. All children are sincerely and warmly welcomed into the centre giving them a real sense of belonging. Their work is beautifully displayed around the rooms promoting their self-esteem and respect for others.

The setting has an extremely positive approach to working with children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. All children are encouraged to succeed at their own level and to reach their full potential in this vibrant environment.

Children are learning to work harmoniously with others as practitioners effectively support them in sharing and taking turns. Children are learning to make decisions as they choose from a wide, balanced range of resources. These resources reflect equal opportunities, successfully helping children to become aware of a wider society. For example, through the range of dressing up clothes, small world toys, books and musical instruments. There are positive images displayed around the centre and the setting actively and successfully celebrates the backgrounds of the children and of the local community. Links are developed with the local school which further fosters a sense of community.

Children are extremely well behaved. They respond well to the positive behaviour management strategies employed by the practitioners. Practitioners are exemplary role models who remain calm and positive at all times and use consistent strategies to promote acceptable behaviour. The centre has a set of 'golden rules' that children have contributed to. These form the basis of the management of behaviour and children can earn certificates for being well behaved as well as for other achievements. This approach raises their self-esteem. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents receive a high level of quality information about the educational provision through the information boards in each room, information packs in the main foyer and regular newsletters. They are informed of their children's progress as they are free to see their child's record of achievement folder and talk to practitioners. Practitioners make comprehensive assessments of each child's progress and parents are invited to attend parents evenings or have specific appointments with their child's key worker. Parents are effectively involved in their children's learning as they participate together in the 'Early Learners' scheme. They enjoy activities suggested in the 'Early Learners' book which is sent home, detailing the themes and suggesting further activities to complete at home. Parents are further involved through participating in activities, such as festival celebrations.

Practitioners make excellent use of information requested on admission to meet children's care needs and, as part of the gradual admission policy, hold regular meetings with parents as their child is being settled into the centre. The setting sees the partnership with parents and carers as central to the development of the child and do whatever they can to support children and their families. Parental feedback is extremely positive and comments made clearly show the appreciation felt by parents.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Overall children's needs are met. Children's care is enhanced by the exceptional organisation of the environment, which enables children to make choices from extremely high quality resources. The owners, managers and staff are highly committed to ensuring that all children receive the highest quality care and education. All staff actively review their own practice through regular meetings, planning evaluations and discussions about children's progress. This ensures that the curriculum and teaching methods take full account of the children's individual needs and the diverse ways in which children learn.

The high quality training programme is carefully planned to meet the individual and collective needs of all staff. For example, practitioners are currently pursuing training on the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). This ensures that all staff are able to deliver a highly successful early years programme for all children. Positive outcomes for children are assured through the comprehensive range of policies and procedures, which are known to parents and adhered to consistently by staff. All policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure they comply with current requirements. Documentation is very well organised, with excellent consideration given to security to ensure confidentiality is maintained. Records are clear, accurately maintained and easily accessible for staff.

A high ratio of staff to children and effective staff deployment, ensures children are always well supervised and supported. The key worker system is very effective and staff get to know the children extremely well. This builds good relationships and helps children feel secure. The setting provides a robust system for the vetting and clearance of all staff. This followed by a structured induction programme and regular appraisals for all.

Leadership and management is outstanding. Staff are led by a highly committed and knowledgeable management team. They work exceptionally well together as a team and support each other in their roles. Practitioners value the different skills that they each have and regularly share information about the children, which helps ensure children's needs are met. The setting promotes the education and outcomes for children exceptionally well, with a team of committed staff who continuously monitor their own performance.

Children play a dynamic part in the nursery. Whenever possible, their thoughts are taken into account when planning activities or making changes within the setting. Staff are always looking at how improvements can be made in the care and learning opportunities they provide for children. Recent questionnaires have included positive comments from staff and parents. Any areas for development are quickly considered, and action taken to improve. This provision clearly demonstrates a truly reflective practice which is conscientiously proactive and responsive.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to make some additions to some policies and procedures and to obtain written parental permission to obtain emergency medical advice or treatment. Children's health and safety is extremely well promoted as all policies and procedures are regularly updated to reflect current childcare practice and changes in legislation. The policy concerned with children's behaviour is comprehensive and includes information about bullying. The procedure to follow should a child become lost has been updated to include reference to calling the police and all parents sign their consent for the provider to seek emergency medical advice or treatment for their child.

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

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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