

Penny Pot Pre-School and Under 5s Creche

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY236204
Inspection date	16 January 2008
Inspector	Christine Anne Rice / Abigail Caroline Cunningham
Setting Address	Hildebrand Barracks, Penny Pot Lane, Harrogate, HG3 2SD
Telephone number	01423 501460
E-mail	stevethompson63@hotmail.com
Registered person	The Trustees of Penny Pot Under 5's Creche
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?

Penny Pot Pre-School and Under 5s Creche is committee run and was established in 1998. It operates from two rooms on the ground floor of the barracks's Jubilee Community Centre. It is situated on the rural outskirts of Harrogate and primarily serves army dependants.

At any one time, a maximum of 33 children may attend the facility which opens each weekday from 09.00 to 15.00 during college term-time. All children share access to a large hall and an enclosed outdoor play area which adjoins the premises.

There are currently 42 children aged from three months to under five years on roll. Of these, 14 children receive funding for nursery education.

There are eight members of staff employed to work with the children, five of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications and three are working towards them. The group receives advisory teacher support from the local authority and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The staff take positive steps to promote the health of children, for example, staff wear gloves and aprons during nappy changing and children wash their hands at appropriate times, such as before eating and after going to the toilet. Pictures of children washing their hands in the bathroom serve as helpful reminders. Each child has their own bedding, which is washed weekly and prevents cross-contamination. The risk of cross infection is additionally reduced as visitors are asked to use gel hand cleaner upon arrival.

Satisfactory arrangements are in place for administering first aid and medication. Five of the staff hold a current first aid certificate and the setting obtains all the necessary permissions for the administration of medication. Accidents are recorded appropriately and the parents countersign these records. Written policies are in place regarding sickness; these are fully implemented and shared with all parents.

Children's health is further promoted as some of the staff have attended food hygiene training. A satisfactory range of snacks is prepared for the children. These include raisins, toasted teacakes, oat cakes and crackers. The children bring their own packed lunches, which the staff serve from a main table. This arrangement precludes the staff sitting and chatting sociably with the children and does not encourage the children to develop independence as they are dependant on the staff to bring their next item of food. The staff wish to promote healthy eating, but this is not proving very successful as the children are choosing the unhealthy foods in their lunch box in preference to the healthy ones. Children stay refreshed as they have access to drinks of water at all times.

The children have limited opportunities for fresh air and outdoor play, during wet, cold weather as they are not always dressed appropriately to make full use of the outside area. This is compensated for to some extent, as the children use a spacious indoor hall, where they enjoy indoor play equipment. They can manage their bodies to create intended movement, for example, while rolling a ball. The children can also move in a range of ways as they walk, crawl through tunnels, go down the slide, roll and run around, revelling in the space. Competently, the children ride bikes, adjusting their speed and changing direction to avoid obstacles, weaving in and out of the other children. Children have an awareness of their own hygiene needs as, for instance, they ask staff for a tissue when they have a runny nose. The children engage in a wide range of activities requiring hand-eye coordination, as they use scissors, pencils and felt pens.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The environment is bright and welcoming with sound evidence of children's play and activity. Children have ample space to move around and explore. Generous storage cupboards accommodate the wide range of resources available for the children, although there is a limited range of resources made from natural materials, such as sponges. In addition, there is a lack of comfortable seating for staff who spend a great deal of time holding and feeding young children. Children's development needs are met through the provision of appropriate furniture, such as full size cots, in a separate sleeping area, and high chairs. All toys are safe and in a satisfactory condition as they are checked regularly, with any broken ones being either mended or discarded.

The children are developing an awareness of safety through the twice monthly practising of the fire drills, which are duly recorded and displayed on the wall. Electrical equipment is regularly tested, which affords the children further protection from fire. The children are kept safe and free from harm as they are supervised at all times and all visitors to the provision are recorded. Children are unable to leave the premises unattended as the entrance door is kept locked and they are never left alone with persons who have not been vetted. In addition, the children's safety is promoted as the outdoor area is carefully checked prior to the children going outside and a covered area provides shade from the sun and protection from the rain.

Children are protected from possible abuse or neglect as all staff have recently attended a child protection course, as well as completing safeguarding children training online. There is a child protection policy, which is shared with parents. This includes the contact details for the local child protection agencies, in addition to the procedures to follow in the event of a relevant concern arising and an allegation being made against a member of staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All staff working with the younger children have attended 'Birth to three matters' training. They confidently implement the framework, which is referenced in the children's profiles. Children profit from the staff's motivation, as demonstrated by their willingness to attend further courses. One member of staff, for example, is about to undertake a short course in heuristic play. The children's emotional needs are well met as the children all have a key person, who ensures they receive consistent care and support, with plenty of individual attention and cuddles. This is especially important as some children in the setting have already moved home seven times because their families are in the army.

The children are happy and settled. They enjoy good interaction with the staff, who play with the children at their level. The children are sociable and friendly, they seek out adults for cuddles and enjoy sharing stories in small groups. There are good opportunities for children of different age groups to mingle, as all the children come together in the afternoon. This arrangement is socially beneficial as the younger children learn from the older ones, who in turn consider the needs of the younger ones.

Children develop independence and practise decision making as they select their own activities from a good range, which includes mark making and imaginative play, such as small world figures, cars, dolls and a garage. Many activities support their language development, including singing, 'Row, row, row your boat' and reading stories. In addition, children enjoy constructing with bricks and participating in physical activities, such as sliding, using the climbing frame and riding on wheeled vehicles. Their creative development is nurtured through the provision of a good range of messy activities, such as dough modelling, painting, gluing and sand and water play.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and children make satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. Teaching is appropriate for all groups of children as staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage, they understand the children's needs and provide a broad range of activities and experiences. All the staff are about to undertake training in the new Early Years Foundation Stage. The manager oversees the long term and medium term plans for the setting, assisted by the staff who identify gaps in learning, such as colours.

These plans cover the six areas of learning and incorporate the use of a broad range of resources, such as construction, plus sand and water play. Some outdoor activities are included in the planning, but not a great deal, which limits the scope for children to make progress towards the early learning goals. All staff share in the formulation of short term weekly plans and planned focused activities include learning objectives.

Regular observations by key workers inform the assessment of individual children. Assessment methods record children's starting points and indicate their termly progress towards the early learning goals. Examples of the children's work demonstrate their approach to learning. Some next steps are included, as a new system is being introduced, though these are not yet applied consistently and comprehensively across all areas of learning. The staff react very positively with the children, answering their questions, stimulating their thoughts and giving them lots of praise and encouragement.

All children separate from their main carer with confidence as they happily come into the provision and settle down to play. They have a positive approach to new experiences since they eagerly explore fresh activities. The children seek out others to share experiences as they ride the bikes together. Children play cooperatively, taking turns, sharing and giving toys to other children, who say 'thank you'. They approach adults confidently, introducing themselves and asking members of staff to read them a story. The staff group the children effectively at story time. As a result, the children enjoy listening to stories, recalling what happens next in their favourite ones. Whilst playing with the animals, the children talk activities through, saying that they will put them in the house to keep warm. The children link sounds to letters as they know that 'K' is for 'Kitty', they enjoy singing rhymes and doing the actions when they sing, 'Twinkle twinkle, little star'. Children are attracted to the mark making table. Older children make good attempts to form recognisable letters and write their names.

Opportunities for counting are incorporated throughout the day, such as at registration when the children count up to 13. Rhymes, such as, 'One, two, three, four, five' reinforce children's counting skills and give them opportunities to practise simple calculation skills. The children sort and match objects by size and colour. They are able to find the animals when the staff give them positional clues. The children understand and use size language, explaining, for instance, that they went on a 'big' aeroplane. They remember significant events, such as when they visited 'nanny' in another country. Through growing cress and plants, the children learn about growth and the natural world. The children realise that tools, such as hammers, can be used for a purpose and are able to build wooden train sets. They can operate a simple computer program as they make a star picture, though the computer screen is positioned rather high.

Children enjoy developing their creativity and imagination. For instance, they learn to differentiate colours and appreciate that different media can be combined as they make igloos out of egg boxes with cotton wool and scraps of material, which they paint. Large cardboard box 'houses' and 'telephone booths' provide good props for imaginative play. The children pretend to make pancakes in the role play area and smile proudly and expressively when they successfully solve a jigsaw puzzle. They enjoy musical activities and are able to sing loudly and quietly; they whisper when their 'animals' are asleep.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's particular needs are fully discussed with parents and included in an 'all about me' booklet. This enables the setting to provide individual care for all the children, in accordance

with the setting's equal opportunities policy. The children are developing a constructive attitude to others and a satisfactory understanding of the wider world and community. This is being promoted through the display of posters and the provision of resources, such as dolls and jigsaws, which portray positive images of diversity. In addition, the children celebrate various festivals, such as Ramadan and Chinese New Year, when they eat noodles. Children who speak English as an additional language are assisted by staff working with parents so that they can communicate with them. Basic words are also shared with all children in the setting, with labels, for example, on the doors in the children's first language. The setting invites visitors from the local community, such as the ambulance service and the army police.

The staff team, who have training and experience in caring for children with special medical needs, welcome children with learning difficulties and disabilities to the setting. They are committed to working in partnership with parents and outside agencies to ensure children receive appropriate support. The staff are good role models; they are caring and enthusiastic. They know the children well and give them lots of positive attention. As a result, the children are settled and busily occupied. The children are cooperative and well behaved, for example, they enjoy helping to tidy up and some children use good manners without being prompted. Children benefit from the staff's positive and consistent approach to managing behaviour. Methods used are age-appropriate and include, for example, child-friendly explanations for unacceptable behaviour and distraction techniques.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. The parents receive clear information about forthcoming topics through regular newsletters and there are notices on the parents' notice board about the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, parents do not benefit from detailed information about the children's curriculum when their children start the Foundation Stage and they do not have open days, although the setting plans to introduce these. Parental involvement is welcomed, for example, through help on outings and during sessions. There are opportunities for the parents to become involved with the children's learning through the use of the daily diary, which parents take home. Additionally, the children take the setting's bear with them when they go on holiday. Parents may view their children's assessment records whenever they wish as these are easily accessible in the children's individual trays.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. The staff team are committed to improving care and education, they recognise weaknesses and are formulating ideas for improvements, such as making changes to the outdoor play area and the lunch time routine. Staff have the opportunity to attend relevant training courses, according to their needs, which are identified in yearly appraisals. Monthly meetings ensure that all staff are well-informed.

The setting is challenged by the frequent changes, which occur when many of the staff and their families are posted to other locations. Consequently, the staff group is ever changing. Nevertheless, the staff work well together as a team and are suitably qualified and trained. The manager is flexible and provides cover for staff absences, ensuring that required adult-child ratios are maintained. The setting has routines, which provide a balanced range of experiences for the children, who enjoy attending the setting, where the environment is warm and friendly. The staff, who are effectively deployed, consistently interact with the children and offer support and encouragement, which helps children feel secure and confident.

An established system for recruitment is in operation. Following interview, references are taken up and appropriate checks are undertaken before staff begin work. Induction procedures ensure that staff are familiar with routines and all important policies, such as child protection. The registration system, which is effective, clearly shows when staff and children are present. All the required documentation is in place, such as a complaints record. Personal information regarding children and families is securely stored and the setting has a comprehensive range of policies, which are shared with parents.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the provision was asked to extend the child protection policy and to maintain details of all staff and record their times of attendance.

Since the last care inspection, the provision has set up a system for recording the times of attendance of the staff in the register and has staff records on site. In addition, the child protection policy has been rewritten to incorporate the contact details for the local child protection agencies, as well as the procedures to follow in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff. Consequently, children are afforded more protection by these changes in policy and documentation.

At the last education inspection, the provision was asked to improve mathematical activities, to review story time, to encourage children to develop fine motor skills and develop the 'Special Educational Needs' policy.

Since the last education inspection, the provision has introduced more maths activities as well as smaller groups at story time. In addition, there are more opportunities for children to develop fine motor skills through, for instance, threading activities, and the 'Special Educational Needs' policy has been revised. Consequently, children's needs are better met and they have improved opportunities for educational development.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been three complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take action in order to meet the National Standards. The complaints together related to National Standard 2: Organisation, National Standard 6: Safety, National Standard 7: Health, National Standard 12: Partnership with Parents and National Standard 14: Documentation. On each occasion an Ofsted inspector made an unannounced visit and actions were raised, which were satisfactorily met by the provider who remains qualified for registration.

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):

- increase opportunities for children to play and learn in the outdoor area in all weathers (also applies to nursery education)
- encourage children to be more independent and to practise healthy eating at lunch time (also applies to nursery education)
- increase the selection of resources which are made from natural materials
- provide comfortable seating for the staff to use when feeding babies and caring for young children

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):

- extend opportunities for parents to gather information about the children's educational curriculum
- continue to develop the system for recording the children's next steps in learning.

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