

Puffins in the City

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number EY300240

Inspection date 14 May 2008

Inspector Sara Bailey

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Registered person Puffins of Exeter LTD

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?

Puffins of Exeter in the City opened in 1999 and was re-registered under the company's new name, Puffins of Exeter Ltd in 2004. It is one of a group of childcare facilities operated by a company that was established in 1990. The nursery operates from the lower ground floor of Keble House in Southernhay, in the centre of Exeter, Devon. Children come from a wide catchment area as most of their parents travel to work on the site.

Children are cared for in four age-groups, using six play areas and a baby sleep room, in an open-plan nursery, divided by mainly transparent partitions. They share access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

The nursery is open each weekday from 07:30 to 18:00, all year round. There are currently 52 children on roll. Of these, 18 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The nursery employs 20 staff. Of these, four of the staff hold a level 4 qualification in childcare, 10 hold a level 3, six are level 2 and four are undertaking level 2 training. The staff team is supported by a senior management

team from the company's head office in Exeter. The nursery completed an accreditation scheme in January 2002 and holds the Investors in People award.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Babies and children's good health is promoted through established routines, such as the staff cleaning tables prior to mealtimes with anti-bacterial spray and ensuring good personal hygiene. For example, children wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating, using liquid soap and paper towels to prevent the risk of cross infection. Children have individual flannels to wash their hands and faces after eating within the different nursery rooms. However, the two-to-three year old age group are at risk of cross infection as they access each other's dirty flannels after use. Staff wash their hands regularly and in-between washing they use anti-bacterial gel, which is attached to their person at all times. They also wash their hands after each child's suncream application to prevent the risk of an allergic reaction. Staff wear disposable aprons and gloves when changing nappies. However, the bathroom bins are accessible to children and not always emptied regularly enough to prevent odours, even with the good ventilation within the nursery.

Babies and children benefit from the effective health documentation in place. For example, records of babies' sleep, nappies and feeds are clearly and accurately recorded and shared with parents. Accidents and medication records are detailed and countersigned by parents. Many staff hold valid first-aid certificates to enable them to deal with minor accidents.

Babies and children enjoy a healthy, nutritious diet, which meets their individual needs. Fruit is provided each morning for snack and a cooked meal is brought in by outside contractors for lunch. Special dietary requirements are well catered for and children learn about each others' diet through discussion. For example, as vegetarian options are given out children comment to each other 'you are a vegetarian', 'I like meat'. Drinking water is readily available and promoted after being physical and in the hot weather. Babies' individual needs are met effectively through feeding routines being consistent with home.

Babies and children benefit from regular outside play opportunities to develop their physical skills and enjoy the fresh air. Babies are taken on regular walks around the city's local attractions and parks, toddlers walk at their own pace the short distance around the complex to the outside play space where all ages can play at different times of the day. They also have inside opportunities to be active as the nursery is well laid out for children to stretch out as they play.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Babies and children are very safe within the setting as there are designated areas for each age group, with age appropriate toys and equipment. For example, the very low, purpose built tables in the baby room encourage them to pull themselves up and sit up safely together for mealtimes. Door security is monitored effectively and visitors are recorded and their identification checked. A security guard for the complex supports staff with security. Internal door handles are located at a high level to prevent children leaving the premises and most of the staff are vigilant about closing these and the safety gates, to prevent children accessing the kitchen and dangerous substances stored in low kitchen units. During the busy lunch period, the

supervision of the two-to-three year- old age group becomes lapse, which potentially puts children at risk. However, outings and specific areas of the nursery are risk assessed effectively. For example, the outside area is thoroughly checked prior to use as it is situated in a communal, public area. This ensures children's safety. Babies and young children are effectively supervised when out for walks, with the use of double buggies and wrist straps. Staff routinely 'head count' to ensure all children are accounted for at all times and a thorough outings form is completed for every walk, identifying the route being taken, estimated time of return and the children present.

Children's welfare is effectively safeguarded as key staff are aware of the signs and procedures to follow in the event of being concerned about a child. All staff are very aware of the importance of passing on their concerns to their immediate supervisor. Procedures are in place to record existing injuries and concerns. The child protection policy has recently been updated and includes the procedures to follow in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Babies have their individual needs met effectively. Staff are very aware of how to best meet their individual needs and adhere to home routines to ensure they feel safe and secure. Babies are cuddled and shown affection. They are well stimulated with a range of age and stage appropriate activities, including a variety of painting experiences and messy play from a very young age. Young children under the age of three years are grouped according to their age and stage of development. Activities are well planned to reflect children's individual interests using the Birth to three matters framework. Those within smaller groups are thriving from the staff's excellent knowledge of their needs and providing quality care, learning and play opportunities. Occasionally, those children who are part of a larger group are not having their individual needs met so effectively. For example, tired children not settling on their beds for a sleep because they are not experiencing cosy or quiet time like the rest of the nursery.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children experience a good range of activities, which are planned taking into account children's own interests. For example, if a child particularly enjoys the sand play, planning is implemented around this to extend their learning across all six areas. Their progress is recorded in their individual assessment files, using naturalistic observations and photographs. The staff are constantly developing their observation skills to improve how children are monitored and assessed. They are also beginning to implement the new Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum in preparation for September 2008.

Children are enthusiastic learners. They are excited and involved in interaction with staff and their peers as they play. They ask appropriate questions and comment on the story being read by staff, although sometimes their curiosity is not extended by staff. For example, a three-year-old notices shadows and footprints in the story book but the adult does not further develop the children's knowledge through discussion. Children enjoy games with sounds and letters. They are very knowledgeable about words beginning with certain letters and find items around the room which they place in the appropriate drawstring bag with the letter on. Children draw intricate pictures and enjoy making marks using a variety of pencils and crayons. They count and learn about addition and subtraction through every day activities such as giving out

cups at snack-time and problem solving as to how many more they need when there are not enough.

Children are independent in all they do. They are confident and self assured through activities which help them to be self-reliant. For example, they serve their own vegetables at meal times, are involved in self-selecting toys of their choice and can independently access the toilet facilities. The older, more able child lacks additional challenge from some staff. This impacts on their achievements and opportunity to further develop many skills already acquired.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children's individual needs are generally very well understood and met. For example, home routines are adhered to and staff share with each other how children like to be comforted at sleep-time to make them feel safe and secure. However, children have little privacy when using the toilets. Boys and girls have equal opportunities in all they do and positive images of diversity are promoted in the resources and posters. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported by a committed Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator.

Children's behaviour is generally very good. Babies and children are praised and encouraged in all they do. However, over the lunch period the behaviour of the two to three year olds deteriorate when staff are covering breaks and attempting to occupy some whilst others sleep. Children disrespect books and toys as well as squabbling over toys, which staff fail to notice.

Partnership with parents is good. Staff develop positive relationships with parents, which benefits the children. They are given good information prior to admission about the setting and the curriculum. This is reinforced through home visits and regular meetings with the parents as well as message books between home and nursery. This ensures children's individual needs are understood and met effectively by staff. Planning is displayed for parents and they have open access to their individual child's assessment records.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Babies and children greatly benefit from the designated areas for each age group, to ensure their safety, although there are some inconsistencies with the care and supervision between different rooms. The layout of the bathroom does not promote privacy, particularly for older, more curious children. All ages enjoy time outside during the daily routine as well as structured times for eating, sleeping and quiet activities. The staff deployment is well organised, with the manager being supported by a deputy and each room having a senior to oversee and take responsibility for their own room and staff. Relief staff from other Puffins nurseries are used to provide cover for holidays and sick leave. Although they may not be familiar with the children, they are familiar with practices and expectations. This impacts positively on the children. Students are particularly well supported and the induction programme is implemented well.

All regulatory documentation is maintained and accurate. For example, each room's register shows children's and staff's times of attendance. The registration certificate is displayed and the complaints log is comprehensive and shared with parents. Policies have recently been updated to reflect current legislation and information for parents and staff.

The leadership and management is good. The nursery manager is very professional and dedicated to her role, leading by example and being very passionate about her nursery. She is well supported by the company's senior management team. The hierarchy of staff is very effective in ensuring that everyone takes responsibility for their own roles, including the deputy, senior nursery staff, qualified staff and those currently on training. Regular meetings are held at all levels to ensure everyone is knowledgeable about all aspects of the day to day running of the setting and individual children where appropriate. In-house training is also given a high priority and the staff are currently undertaking training for the EYFS. The management are constantly looking at ways to improve the outcomes for children and complete regular, detailed self assessments.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection in 2005 it was agreed to address two recommendations, relating to health and the organisation of daily routines. Since then, a new manager has taken over and both recommendations have been successfully addressed. Hygiene policies and procedures were to be consistently implemented and potty training needed reviewing. Potty training no longer takes place in the play rooms, but all toileting needs are met in the bathroom. Hygiene practices are consistent throughout the nursery, although the supervision of the two-to-three-year old room needs to be improved to ensure children are not put at risk of cross infection. The daily routine has been improved to ensure children are not spending long periods of time waiting for their lunch. The cook dishes up the younger children's food and the older children only serve themselves the vegetables so that they are not waiting for too long.

At the last nursery education inspection in 2005, it was agreed to address one recommendation, relating to observations and assessments building on what children already know. This has been addressed. All children are regularly observed and the planning is based on individual children's interests. However, the more able child is not always sufficiently challenged or their learning extended. This has been raised as a new recommendation.

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.

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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 the good health of all aged children, at all times through the consistent practice and use of blankets, flannels and the regular emptying of nappy bins
- ensure the organisation of lunch time periods are consistent throughout the nursery to meet individual children's needs with specific attention to sleeping children and supervision within the two-to-three-year old age group
- develop the privacy of older children when using the toilet facilities.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure all staff provide sufficient challenge for the older, more able children to help them further progress along the stepping stones

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