

Poppyfield

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY359845
Inspection date	13 May 2008
Inspector	Lynne Kathleen Talbot
Setting Address	Fairfield Lower School, Fairfield Park, Stotfold, Bedfordshire, SG5 4FB
Telephone number	07814 204126
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Registered person	Poppies Nursery Ltd
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Sessional care, Out of School 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?

Poppyfield operates from two classrooms situated within Fairfield Lower School, Fairfield Park in Stotfold. The provision also has use of the main school hall. The provision was registered in August 2007 and serves the local and wider area. A maximum of 48 children may attend at any one time. All children share access to the outdoor play area.

The provision is open each day from 08.00 to 18.00. Children may attend sessions before school and after school. Pre-school sessions are offered either for morning or afternoon, with the option of a full day. Holiday hours are offered 08.00 to 18.00. The provision supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language.

There are 10 staff directly working with the children, including the managers and eight hold recognised early years qualifications. Two staff are currently attending training in early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a highly stimulating environment where there is plenty of space and separate areas to offer a wide range of activities. Children's immediate safety, health and welfare is extremely well promoted because staff understand and promote children's good health by being extremely positive role models and ensuring that their own knowledge is up-to-date. For example, staff attending training courses cascade that information to all the others and any information obtained via other sources is shared. This is supported by the use of staff information books into which information is written and which staff read and sign to acknowledge. There is excellent support from the owner who works alongside the staff which further enhances the care, additional information and training is sought for all staff.

Children have ample opportunities to understand personal health and take full responsibility for their physical needs. This is consistently promoted as they wash and dry their hands independently before snacks or as they complete activities. Children take a full part in discussions where they explore the links between germs and the transfer of germs onto foods they eat, which may later make them ill. They explain clearly that they need to 'wash the germs away to stop them going into their tummies'. Children listen intently as explanations such as placing their hands over their noses when they sneeze to stop them from 'giving the cold to their friends' are given. This enables them to gain a secure understanding of the reasons for their actions, passing this information along to their friends as they play. Children learn to be involved in their community and the wider world through schemes including recycling, a process within which they all take part, with separate bins situated in the provision for recycling food stuffs and paper.

Children enjoy healthy and nutritious foods, including a broad range of fresh fruit and vegetables and have excellent opportunities to learn about healthy eating. They participate in a range of creative activities such as preparing and cutting their fruits for snack, making salad wraps for their afternoon snack and exploring themed activities such as 'traffic light' biscuits. They enjoy food tasting sessions, where they have further opportunities to learn about different foods such as fruits from around the world. Children explore the properties of foods such as yeast where they closely observe growth and how matter changes. Children attending for lunch or other meals participate in a social meal time discussing the activities of the day. Through these meal and snack times children learn valuable rules including not licking their knife, in order to be safe. Children are fully supported in this area of their development because the provision has gained a healthy eating award. They display and offers information to families to promote that area of development. Children note the effect that exercise has on their body as they feel their hot faces and note that they are perspiring during exercise and the hot weather. They have access to jugs of water and help themselves when they are thirsty with minimal help needed. This promotes their independence and development of health awareness. Children take part in exciting experiments with planting including herbs, lettuces, sunflower seeds, broad beans and potatoes. They observe, measure and smell the plants exploring their language to describe what they are experiencing. For example, one particular experiment is placing a potato inside a box with a hole at one end for light, placing an obstacle inside and watching the roots bend around the obstacle. This type of inventive and stimulating task rapidly enhances children's learning through first hand experience.

All children become fully involved and engrossed in an exciting range of innovative and developmentally appropriate physical activities. These provide optimal challenge and contribute significantly to their good health. They develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills and co-ordination as they participate in structured activities. These include movement sessions and activities planned around themed topics as well as exploring throwing and catching with bean bags and buckets. Children move freely between the indoor and outside areas making totally independent choices. Their physical movement is highly developed as they construct 'dens' from large boxes and curtains, plant with peat into pots and transfer it with a wheelbarrow and use woodwork to explore texture and tools. Children use small equipment such as scissors, glue spreaders and small construction pieces which aid their development of fine manipulative skills. They take a full part in preparing materials for play such as dough and mix paints choosing colours and learning about texture. Children are fully involved in the routines of the setting. This physical development continues to be advanced, for example, through the booked training for staff within a 'Fit-kids' programme. Younger children are developing their independence physically and emotionally. They are active and becoming increasingly independent, acquiring control over their bodies and new physical skills. They are learning to express their needs and are beginning to meet those needs independently, for example, by being able to access all activities and play materials themselves.

Children's general health and safety is totally supported by all relevant paperwork and records as well as vast amounts of additional information and procedures set in place to support them whilst at the provision. Children's medical needs, both ongoing or of an emergency nature, are dealt with through clearly outlined procedures carried out by qualified staff. Extremely clear methods of recording and procedures underpin all aspects of physical care. These stringent, well-executed measures ensure that children's health can be promoted at all times.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children's safety is exceptional and given a high priority. Risks of accidental injury are minimised because staff are vigilant and use thorough risk assessments to reduce potential hazards. Children are kept safe because staff complete these risk assessments daily in all areas consistently and carry out overall assessments frequently. These include comprehensive risk assessments for outings and visitors to the premises which take place. Policies, procedures and paperwork in this area are extremely well planned and reviewed.

Children have a firm understanding about taking responsibility and keeping themselves and others, safe as they take part in regular emergency drills. For instance, fire drills are carried out every half term for a whole week both morning and afternoon to ensure that no child is missed and that they all clearly understand the routine. They are given explanations by staff and understand the importance of listening to instructions in order to prevent accidents. Children show an advanced knowledge of safety in the sun as they seek hats when going outdoors from an extremely early age and readily comply with the application of sun lotion. Parents are fully involved in this procedure and provide named, labelled bottles which have clear written permission for the application of the lotion attached to the bottle. Children have opportunities to learn about other aspects of safety such as using equipment because explanations given to them encourage them to think about consequences. For example, staff ask them to think about what may happen if they leave something on the floor where they or others may trip over it. Children respond to these reminders and are able to predict consequences which helps them to retain that information themselves.

Children are cared for in a stimulating, welcoming setting where their work is creatively displayed on all areas and at child-height. Continuous monitoring of the environment and staff's constant attention to all details ensures that children's access to play materials reaches a high standard of safety. This is further promoted by the provision of appropriate equipment such as correctly-sized slides, play houses and climbing frame. Staff take part in a safety analysis of every area as individuals and bring that information together to assess any potential risk or area that is not meeting children's needs or offering stimulation. This action ensures that the premises remain highly motivating to children and an area within which they may freely explore to be self-motivated learners.

Children are exceptionally well protected because staff have a thorough understanding of child protection issues and the appropriate steps to follow. They have continued to review their practice and made sure that procedures meet the Local Safeguarding Children Board requirements. Children are fully protected because staff have all attended training and update this annually. All new staff receive thorough and robust induction and, as part of that process, complete a safeguarding children questionnaire to establish their level of understanding from the time that they join the group.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are exceptionally happy, secure and settled. They are extremely eager to attend and participate in the activities and play opportunities provided. They settle eagerly to play areas, anticipating what they may be about to do each day. Children are very confident in their relationships with each other and with staff, participating in discussions and initiating conversations. Children engage in discussions about a variety of topics, for example, sharing a folder brought from home into the setting about football cards and players, they describe the player, the team and talk about the football strips that each will wear. Children plan and develop their play as was seen when they were totally engrossed in designing 'dens' outside using sheets, large boxes, planks, cushions, pegs and other materials selected independently from indoors. They considered the best way to construct safe structures and both posed and answered questions themselves. Their personal development and self-esteem are consistently promoted through sensitive support and interaction from experienced, devoted staff. Older children are enabled to feel in control of their environment because they are listened to and meet together to plan and discuss future activities.

Children show a high level of independence as they move around the setting from indoors to outside and control their own activities and independent learning. This is because staff have equipped all areas with an extensive variety of inviting materials and offer them additional choices wherever appropriate. For example, when noting that a child enjoyed removing and replacing a lid when exploring fuzzy felts, the staff member noted that enjoyment was being had from shaking the tin. She went on to offer a range of musical instruments to explore and this extended the exploratory play immensely. Children access an extensive range of free craft materials where they decide what they want to develop with minimal help. They help to make dough and mix paints making conscious decisions about colour and exploring textures.

Children are recognised as complete individuals with different rates of development and interest. Evaluation of planned activities is carried out by detailed and thorough observations at the time of the activity where staff watch what children are doing and offer support where needed. This is assisted by tracking circles and thorough evaluation of children's stage of development. Assessment of children's progress is meticulous and purposeful, staff are highly skilled in using

a variety of methods. They ensure that assessments are consistently fed into and totally guide, the planning so that all children are offered challenging opportunities and activities which are adapted to suit individuals. Children's development is further promoted because each child has an individual play plan, which assesses their current stage, plans activities to promote the next stages and then evaluates these in order to review and plan further activities. This ensures that all children are able to realise their full potential. All staff make excellent use of open questions and take opportunities to extend children's learning.

Children settle into the setting extremely quickly due to the staff's care, understanding and planning. They ensure that they have all necessary information about children, including their likes and dislikes. Home visits to the children and families assists both the separation process and the initial developmental support for children in their play. Younger children's learning and development is fully promoted because staff have an excellent understanding of child development. Staff totally embrace the 'Birth to three matters' framework and use this to inform all assessments and planning for younger children, thereby promoting their balanced development in all areas.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children have an excellent attitude to learning and are making outstanding progress towards the early learning goals. They are very well prepared for school and the environment within the setting promotes their confidence so that they are able to respond positively to new challenges and confidently negotiate this transition. Children's progress in all areas is well balanced and consistently promoted as staff use comprehensive methods for assessing them, making use of information gained from this to highlight areas to be covered. Their overall development is consistently promoted throughout their time at the setting because staff have an excellent knowledge of the Foundation Stage, using this in all activity planning and assessments.

Children demonstrate their enjoyment as they choose their play and activities from the wide range offered. These include daily opportunities to engage in sand and water play (including mixing water into sand and experimenting with how it changes), a wide variety of crafts and construction, reading and creative opportunities for role play, such as taking part in drama using nursery rhymes. Children's knowledge is further extended as they participate in a range of stimulating topics which change on a regular basis or according to children's interest. This enables them to look more closely at subjects such as 'natural and mechanical growth' where they explore seed planting, nature trails, building sites and architecture.

The extremely well-organised environment and daily planning means that children have excellent opportunities to develop the attitudes and dispositions that enable them to achieve in their learning. They are always given sufficient time and appropriate resources to enable them to complete tasks and their behaviour is exemplary throughout the sessions, enabling them to listen and concentrate. They are highly motivated to learn through the provision of exciting and interesting activities. For example, they have ready access to natural materials including logs, planks, peat, cones and regular woodwork using real tools. These experiences stimulate them to explore what is around them and benefit from real-life experience.

Children interact exceptionally well with others, listening carefully and competently using language to explain their thoughts, ideas and activities. They have excellent opportunities to learn about the feelings of others and to empathise with them. For instance, they explore feelings when discussing jewellery worn by staff and adults, listening intently as it is explained

that items relate to happy events involving people related to the adults. They talk about the love that each has for their families and explore both their own feelings and those of others around them. Children learn to predict possible outcomes when discussing falling from a chair if not sitting carefully. They discuss possible outcomes and talk about being sad, learning that it is fine to be sad and show those feelings. Children are introduced to the wider world through many activities including, for example art such as the works of 'Jackson Pollock' or a range of music. They have encouragement to review and look at aspects of the world around them linked into activities whereby they may begin to appreciate broader stimulation.

Children are very confident in using language to organise and explain their thoughts and play, for example, they take part in regular evaluation of the activities through the use of questionnaires to recall and review the activities. Children are eager to use the shared book scheme with the setting taking books, or equipment, home each day as they choose. Children have abundant opportunities to use writing for a purpose and will seek those means independently. Clip-boards set around the setting with pencils and paper attached are used frequently by children. For example, a child seen to spot his name inside his hat independently decided to copy it onto a pad whilst others use the pads to write the measurements of things they have measured around the room or draw around shapes or objects they have found. Children share news together and afterwards will use writing to 'scribe' and make a record of what has been said. They have consistent encouragement to be aware of initial sounds and letters and will question what they see and hear. For instance, they become involved in lengthy discussions about the letter 'm' questioning the name and sound of the letter and why they are different, they show that they have an eagerness to learn supported by extremely effective teaching.

Children recognise that numbers carry meaning, confidently and correctly counting the number of objects and using numbers in a meaningful context. For example, they count the numbers of chairs at tables, calculating that one or two more are needed in order for each to have a seat. They confidently use problem solving when threading and analyse for themselves that they need a disc with a small hole on the end of a thread to stop the larger ones from falling off the end of the thread. They compare size, height and length and confidently talk about size comparisons. Children enjoy counting by rote and will eagerly chant numbers together as far as and beyond, twenty. Children competently name and recognise shapes during activities as seen when drawing around shapes, this is extended by staff who draw them towards thinking about spheres after close observation shows that they fully understand the idea of a circle. This is an example of excellent observation and immediate planning taking place throughout sessions by the staff group. Children are totally encouraged to extend their activities with the families to enable them to share in the learning of the children. For example, when discussing the measuring of a model and pointing out that tapes at home may be longer, children are encouraged to keep the model and take it home to measure with the family before returning to the setting and feeding back the measurements. This is clear commitment both to fostering children's independent learning and to fully involving families within that learning.

Children have ample opportunities to observe, explore and question in a wide range of activities that form the foundation of their later learning in subjects such as mathematics, science and technology. For example, they have the use of a computer, calculators, magnets, cameras and printers which they explore with enthusiasm. They plant and grow seeds and explore the natural world with great enthusiasm through herb gardens, activities with frogs and frog spawn and observing tanks of snails. They become aware of the wider world and issues affecting the planet taking part in recycling with enthusiasm and becoming involved in a large number of charity fundraising events. These activities ensure that they are interested in the wider world around

them and stimulate that broader interest. Children have excellent opportunities to learn about the present and past because they take part in many evaluation topics and target activities which aim to encourage reflection, recall of events in their lives and anticipation of future events.

Children's physical development is extremely well promoted and they enjoy an extensive range of physical activities that help them to develop their confidence and skills. For example, they participate in structured sessions such as action rhymes, dancing and woodwork. They show an excellent understanding and a positive attitude towards physical exercise and healthy lifestyles, discussing concepts such as healthy eating, the importance of exercise and good hygiene practices. Children enjoy numerous creative opportunities to explore colour, texture, shape and form. One such activity involved exploration of a large conch shell which children touched, listened to, smelt and discussed, wondering where it had come from and what may have lived in it. They gave full reign to their imagination guessing what may have lived inside deciding that it may have been a lobster or other sea creature. Later they keenly used close observation to draw the shell whilst others independently decided to draw around it showing initiative.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

All children are welcomed and play a full and active part in the provision because staff value and respect their individuality and the family context for each child. Children are offered an extensive range of opportunities which promote their understanding of their local society and increase their awareness of other cultures and ways of life. Children welcome each other into the setting and have opportunities to share language, foods, songs and cultures together. Children explore other cultures as they make books together such as, 'A Hindu wedding' and explore the topic 'The world and ourselves'. Children become familiar in their local community and take part in charity fund-raising events. They review their local surroundings frequently as this is a changing and on-going development where building works are constant at present. They are supported in this by the woodworking activities, the displays showing the changing buildings around them inside the provision and the access to natural and man-made building materials. They welcome visitors to the setting such as the Optician, the local Vicar and people from the community both able-bodied and disabled. These visitors help them to understand the roles of people in the community around them.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. Children's needs are extremely well documented and met and their welfare consistently promoted to a high standard because of staff's excellent relationship with parents and carers and high quality information about the provision given. Children are kind and considerate to each other and to staff. They are encouraged to think about each others feelings and eagerly take care of each other. This was seen when a child fell over outside and another came into the provision to fetch a staff member even though staff were in fact outside with the children. Children have visual prompts in the setting to enable them to remember the unacceptable behaviours and have taken a full part in developing the 'Poppyfield Group Rules' which are displayed. Children take part in annual questionnaires alongside those of their parents and have every opportunity to contribute to the future development of the setting commenting on what they do or do not like. Older children participate in children's meetings whereby they voice opinion and action plans are developed for the ongoing development of the extended care provision. Their behaviour is excellent throughout the sessions as they take part in activities and competently organise turn-taking and sharing. Children do understand when their action has upset another and will

quickly help to replace items they may have disturbed and say they are sorry to others. This is also shown as when a chair is given up by an adult to a child, a comment is heard from the child's friend that says, 'she's a nice girl'. Children are able to feel fully secure as staff make every effort to understand significant events in their lives and anticipate the possible disruption these may bring. Children show an eagerness to learn and experience new activities or things they have not seen before. For example, there was a huge interest in a conch shell brought into the group which resulted in children listening to 'the sea' and then completing close observation drawing of it. Children showed that they were fascinated as they felt it, examined it and described it to each other.

Children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities have their requirements clearly identified as there is a practical policy relating to this. Staff ensure, when children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are attending, that this is implemented, working with individual children and parents to make sure that all are included in the activities and routines. Professionals are invited into the group with the full agreement of parents and carers and close relationships are developed to enable children to receive the best possible support. Children for whom English is not the first language receive appropriate support as staff work hard to establish working relationships with parents and extended family. This includes detailed planning for every individual which identify any specific difficulties and address ways to surmount them. Notices are displayed in multiple languages, words and songs for each language are learnt and used by staff to enable children to be able to communicate clearly.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early education is outstanding. There is a strong commitment to involving parents fully in the setting and in their children's learning. Parents are kept superbly well informed of their children's progress through regular newsletters, consultation meetings with staff and open access to their children's files and assessment records. Initial home visits play a large part in the settling-in process for children. Individual learning plans for all children are developed in partnership with parents and carers and reviewed regularly. Daily welfare books support the complete partnership and are used to show daily events and news, complete half term summaries showing where children have achieved within either 'Birth to three matters' or the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage and offer space for parents to comment and feedback any news. Parents are kept fully involved within planning not only through the notice boards but because each topic plan is placed into the welfare books, along with ideas for activities to become involved in, associated with the theme. Parents have excellent opportunities to provide feedback to continue developing the setting through questionnaires which are comprehensive, they also have opportunities to attend workshops arranged to show how the activities planned foster the children's development and learning. All these efforts are consolidated by the partnership contract completed by all parties to fully develop the working partnership. These commendable steps ensure that parents' views are valued, standards are maintained and high quality care can be provided for each child.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children benefit from the dedicated care provided by experienced and skilled staff. Their daily comfort and enjoyment is enhanced by the quality of organisation and the attention to all details relating to their care and well-being. Children's varying needs are consistently met and they are offered a broad, stimulating range of activities. Topics are extended or shortened according to the children's interest, this enables children to become self-motivated learners. The well-organised

environment means that children have excellent opportunities to develop the dispositions and attitudes that enable them to achieve in their learning.

Children's welfare and safety are fully promoted through the setting's exemplary policies and procedures and the staff's practical knowledge and daily implementation of these. There is a clear and thorough induction process for new staff, providing information and support. This continues through the ongoing staff assessment and appraisal system, which ensures that all training needs are identified and staff are able to work appropriately with all children. The methods used include both annual and monthly appraisals whereby staff reflect on their practice identifying an assessment of the common core skills, identify their ongoing training needs and work towards continued development. All staff take part in staff to staff observation, feeding back and learning together in all areas.

The leadership and management of children in receipt of funding for early education is outstanding. Children's overall welfare is promoted by the advanced understanding that the owner has of her role and responsibilities. She ensures that she is aware of new regulations, carrying out research and reviews to implement any changes and carefully studying the implications of these to both children and staff. For example implementing the forthcoming Early Years Foundation Stage into all planning areas, arranging meetings with the Head teacher of the school setting to establish a sharing of information practice and arranging training for all staff. The owner and managers act as excellent role models and staff are highly motivated, acquiring qualifications and regularly attending additional training. All daily sessions are thoroughly planned, with a balanced range of opportunities throughout the day. Staff pay full attention to what children are doing and ensure that they are always given sufficient time and resources to complete their activities and tasks adapting any activities to meet any interests arising. For example, when children play and shake tins, musical instruments are offered and when children are seen to be enjoying building, incorporating height and length into their play by offering facilities to promote that new interest. Staff are fully involved in an ongoing self-evaluation and development plan which is completed each term. They, together with the leaders, identify plans for action, review 'what is it like for a child here?', rotate areas of responsibility and review their inclusion checklist and log. They meet regularly to plan and evaluate future work, to incorporate target activities fed from the children's assessments and review each weeks activities every week. Continuous and rigorous monitoring procedures within which all staff participate enables practitioners to maintain the highest standards of teaching and care for children attending. This is reflected in the assessment and achievements of children shown in their personal files.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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