

Priory Poppets

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Adelaide Griffith
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Type of inspection	Nursery Education

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 NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Priory Kindergarten, Nursery and Reception Class are within Priory School, an independent school which opened in 1935. They operate from five rooms on the ground floor in the preparatory school buildings and also use the school hall, dining room, gymnasium, chapel and music room. The school is situated in the Edgbaston area of Birmingham. A maximum of 76 children may attend the setting at any one time. The Kindergarten, Nursery and Reception Class are open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 75 children aged from six months to under five years on roll. Of these, 36 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area extending across the city boundaries. The nursery currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs 16 staff, 11 of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Experienced staff have an in-depth knowledge of the Foundation Stage and this is reflected in the planning. Observations are carried out frequently and the information gained is used for future planning and for the next stage in children's learning. High levels of challenge are included in order to promote children's learning effectively. For example, for children with well-developed counting skills counting backwards to five and then to 10 is planned for their individual learning.

Children from diverse backgrounds are competently supported in developing excellent language and communication skills. Owing to an interesting range of resources that reflect the cultures children come from all have a real sense of belonging. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are commendably stimulated and staff work with parents and external agencies to meet children's additional needs effectively.

Staff use a variety of teaching methods to help children learn to the best of their ability. They consistently make links with other experiences. For example, there is recall of the previous day's activities before moving on to the topic in hand. Challenge is skilfully included in activities as children are asked to give examples to demonstrate their understanding of the use of letters at the start and end of words. A holistic approach makes learning interesting and meaningful. For instance, children are gaining understanding of different types of transport and develop this theme by making construction toys that represent vehicles, such as cars and tractors. In addition, real life experiences are reflected in holiday photographs to indicate destinations to which they have travelled. This personal perspective significantly enhances children's knowledge and understanding. Children's learning is comprehensively extended as they pick apples in the orchard and use these in cooking activities.

Children are forming relationships with peers and are very confident in their interaction with adults. Children are effectively encouraged to make a contribution to the setting. Consequently, they develop a sense of responsibility through acting as monitors on a daily basis. Children choose favourite books for reading during quiet periods and more able children read a range of sentences independently. They are engrossed when using a simple programme with information technology and an exciting range of programmable toys are available. Children have access to audio equipment which incorporates head sets that are used for playing games or for listening to stories of their choice. Children clearly demonstrate awareness of bodily reactions after exercise. For example, they talk of feeling 'a bit cold' after swimming and understand that they must dry their bodies in order to feel warm. Children benefit from ample opportunities for walking across the fields of the setting. All children recognise primary colours and most recognise a range of secondary colours. More able children colour very precisely within lines. Imaginative role-play is enriched through activities. For instance, children bring their own teddies from home to participate in picnics in the school's extensive grounds.

Children are very well behaved and comply readily with requests, for example, to raise hands before answering questions. All children are rewarded for effort and achievement and they are praised constantly. This means that their self-esteem is consistently raised. Children are sensitively encouraged to develop a sense of safety through reminders not to sit too close to others and they are learning to develop caring attitudes when reminded to apologise. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff work with the children much of the time. There is a balance between adult-directed activities and opportunities for children to lead play. The environment is effectively organised to promote independence. Most of the resources are at children's level and they freely access the water cooler when required. Furthermore, children help themselves to desserts at dinner time. Staff make imaginative use of the accommodation. The room is cheerful due to colourful displays and examples of children's artwork. Large models of numbers are mounted on stands and illustrations of letters promote children's subliminal learning superbly. Outside the play area is enhanced with designs of snakes and ladders. Additionally, a road with several lanes helps children to practise road safety skills at the pedestrian crossing and they sit for a rest at the 'bus stop'. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is outstanding. At the outset parents receive a prospectus with information about the setting. An induction day for children moving into the nursery provides information to raise parental awareness of the Foundation Stage including full explanations of all areas of learning. The complaints procedure is displayed on the parents' board and copies of weekly plans ensure that they are consistently kept informed about activities that promote children's learning. At the start of nursery staff carry out a succession of observations to note children's developmental attainment and information is shared daily with parents about children's experiences. Detailed progress reports are provided at parents' evening. Parents are fully encouraged to make a contribution to their child's learning. For example, they participate in the reading scheme. On a practical note parents are very well supported in meeting their child's needs through alternative arrangements for accessing swimming and other facilities.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The leadership and management of funded children is outstanding. The registered person has a vision to develop the forest school concept in order to enhance children's learning and to make more effective use of the outdoor facilities. There is a very strong emphasis on promoting creative activities including drama and dance. A gymnasium is available to support children's understanding of the benefits of physical activities.

Staff form a cohesive team who work well together to plan activities with full support from the early years manager. Annual appraisals are carried out to note staff's performance and to identify areas for improvement. In addition, teaching methods are observed by the department manager and targets are set accordingly to ensure that children's learning is facilitated through best practice. All staff including the managers attend courses frequently. Consequently, children's learning is underpinned by staff's knowledge of recent and up to date initiatives.

The registered person and managers demonstrate a capacity for continuous improvement. For instance, suggestions from the last inspection have been addressed and staff are working on developing additional aspects of meal times. The strengths of the setting include an ethos of promoting children's personal and social development and of achieving numeracy and literacy skills to a high standard. Children's learning is enriched through additional activities, such as the learning of foreign languages. Moreover, staff are committed and enthusiastic. They have worked in the setting for a considerable period and have developed successful relationships

with families. This means that children are totally at ease in the environment. Exemplary leadership and management ensures that children are making substantial progress towards the early learning goals. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection there were no significant weaknesses to report. The provider was asked to give consideration to the organisation of meal times to allow children to be involved in serving food and to increase their personal independence. Children's independence is now well promoted through procedures that allow them to serve others at snack time and the accessibility of the water cooler effectively promotes self-help skills.

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 NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

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