

Pooh Corner Pre School & Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY371775
Inspection date	30/10/2008
Inspector	Sheila Harrison / Gillian Charlesworth

Setting address	Ashlyns School, Chesham Road, BERKHAMSTED, Hertfordshire, HP4 3AH
Telephone number	01442 863286
Email	cathysykes@poohnursery.com
Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Description of the setting

Pooh Corner Nursery, After School Club and Playscheme opened in 1991 and re-registered in 2008 as Pooh Corner Pre-School & Nursery. It is located in the grounds of Ashlyn's School, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire. The setting works independently from the school and operates from four ground floor rooms and nine rooms on two floors in two school buildings. The ground floor has access facilities for people with limited mobility. The lower ground floor for the pre-school and after school care and the first floor for the children aged from two to three years can be accessed via stairs. The day nursery is open each weekday, from 07:30 to 18:30, 50 weeks of the year. The after school club is open each weekday, from 15:00 until 18:30, term time only and the holiday playscheme is open from 07:30 until 18:30 during all school holidays. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area. Children come from a wide catchment area.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory part of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 74 children in the early years age range may attend the day nursery at any one time. A maximum of 24 children, from the later years age range may attend the after school club and holiday playscheme at any one time. There are currently 61 children on roll in the pre-school section and there are currently 21 children in the later years age range of up to eight years in the after school club's roll, although children up to the age of 12 may attend. The setting currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

Pooh Corner Pre School & Nursery employs 13 members of staff. Of these, two staff have an early years degree or equivalent and 10 hold an appropriate childcare qualification. One staff member is working towards a qualification. The setting's accreditation was renewed with Hertfordshire Quality Standard in 2007.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Children are happy and settled as there are generally effective systems to ensure individual needs are identified and promoted. The dominance of the adult-led routines and the lack of monitoring within the provision means that children are not always fruitfully involved in play and learning. Staff have begun to improve the planning and assessment systems at the setting although these are still under development but not yet fully effective and therefore some children are not fully challenged given their starting points and capabilities. There are positive relationships with parents that help staff to know the children well and some procedures to involve parents in their children's learning. The setting has strong links with the community. Children are excited and involved in the plans for the forthcoming allotment. Staff are conscientious and generally supervise the children well. However, some hazards are not fully identified and the documents to monitor the vetting of the adults is disorganised. This potentially compromises children's safety.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- improve the quality and consistency of observation, assessment and planning systems and involve parents, to ensure that children achieve as much as they can in relation to their starting points and capabilities
- review daily routines to ensure the balance of adult and child-led activities ensure that each child receives an enjoyable and challenging experience through active learning; being creative and thinking critically across the areas of learning
- ensure the safety and security of the provision is effectively monitored (this refers to the consistent keeping of documentation; suitable risk assessment; review the staff deployment; and ensure the security and access of the premises)

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- improve records of the information used to assess suitability and to demonstrate to Ofsted that checks have been undertaken.

13/11/2008

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The nursery has a well-established, highly-qualified and enthusiastic staff team who have a commitment to continuous improvement. There is an effective system to allow staff to update their skills and knowledge by gaining qualifications and attending short courses on specific subjects. They are encouraged to cascade this information to the rest of the staff. Many of the staff are involved in the quality improvement process and some have contributed to the Ofsted self- evaluation form. Most of the staff discuss improvements to the setting at team meetings and informally throughout the day. However, this analysis lacks vigour and the monitoring of the setting is inconsistent leading to records, planning and practice not sufficiently scrutinised. Therefore staff miss opportunities to ensure all children are challenged and interested in their learning and development.

Many staff have a key area of responsibility and this allows staff to develop an area of expertise. However, the management of risks and the deployment of staff is not always organised efficiently leading to children sitting for long periods of time and appropriate resources are not easily accessible to promote children's learning and safety.

Staff work well with other professionals in the local authority advisory service. This has lead to a new planning and assessment system linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) although this is not fully in operation and therefore not fully effective. There is generally a sound induction process with suitable policies

and procedures to safeguard the welfare of the children. The action made at the registration visit has been adequately addressed and staff understand the child protection procedures and generally understand how to implement them although some recording systems are weak. The recruitment system is not effectively organised to demonstrate the safe management of the children.

Staff have a good knowledge of each child's background and they work in partnership with the parents to ensure that there are valuable strategies to support individual needs including systems to support children with learning difficulties and /or disabilities and those with English as an additional language. Many parents regularly talk to staff about their children's learning and development through the parents' consultation evenings and informally at the end of the day. Information on the setting is easily accessed through the website, emails and newsletters. Parents have some opportunities for being involved in the children's learning, for example, they contribute photographs of the children for a display on babies. However, parents do not fully contribute to children's developmental charts which potentially limit children's progress given their starting points and capabilities.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are happy and quickly settle with staff who know them very well. Good relationships are established with parents and this enables staff to generally provide for children's individual needs. Staff greet the children warmly and comforters are respected. Children develop a strong sense of belonging and it is not unusual for the older children to make special trip to the say hello to staff that cared for them when they were younger.

Staff promote valuable aspects of the children's learning and development through their strong links with the community. Children are involved in the planting plans for the forthcoming allotment as they take turns to visit the allotments to meet with the current allotment holders and observe vegetables growing. They visit the registered provider's garden and experience the weight and size of the large marrows and rhubarb leaves. Children behave well and are respectful of the needs of others. They acknowledge the important festivals as they taste the apples dipped in honey for Rosh Hashanah. Staff, parents and children take part in fundraising activities and this encourages children to show care and concern. Older children develop a sense of an achievement as they help a younger child to work the computer. Staff inspire confidence in the children to take the next steps in their physical development as they assure them they will catch them safely if they try the stilts and then further develop balancing games on a large tyre placed in the playground. Older children are well supported in a mathematics game that includes counting and identifying numerals. However, a dominance of adult-directed routines and activities for children aged over one year such as lining-up, worksheets and timetabled activities are time consuming and directive. This limits the chances for children to think critically or to develop positive attitudes to learning independently.

Staff undertake regular observations and complete developmental records. Staff based in the rooms with the youngest children use the child's favourite toys to help them make the next steps in their development, for example, they reposition a

desired toy to encourage non-mobile babies to reach out and start to move. However, some observations are not assessed in a timely manner or linked to the planning system. Therefore, the next steps in the children's learning that genuinely matches their interests are not fully realised when considering activity and topic planning for children. Staff ensure older children experience a surprise snow fall by timetabling an outing in the grounds but they miss opportunities to extend children's learning and to use all their senses. While children in the holiday playscheme can generally follow their interests within a strict routine, the adult control during a chocolate painting activity limits their independence.

The nursery promotes an environment rich in print with many well written labels and there is an abundance of photographs of the children at play. Children have some opportunities to choose the toys from an adult-directed range but some equipment is inaccessible and not always suitably challenging to help children sufficiently develop their play. Staff are generally vigilant in the supervision of the children although risk assessments do not cover some aspects or hazards associated with some activities or the security of the whole of the premises. This potentially leads to children being able to access insecure parts of the premises. Children are gaining an awareness of keeping themselves safe with the visit of the fire engine and practising crossing roads during a walk in the extensive grounds.

Children's health needs are well met with a range of healthy meals and snacks. Younger children are encouraged to try new tastes as they watch the staff prepare vegetables with houmous and tzatziki although older children are not always involved in the preparation of the snacks. Some of the lunch and snack times are well managed with staff creating a very pleasant environment for older children to serve themselves and to return for more, ensuring their likes, dislikes and needs are respected. However, children and parents are not always fully informed of the menus as they are not always appropriately displayed. Children are protected from the spread of infection as the nursery has suitable hygiene procedures. They have many chances to have fresh air and exercise in the playgrounds and extensive grounds at various times within a timetabled framework. Children have some chances to play imaginatively on a larger scale as they build with large wooden blocks outside.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	3

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	3
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	3

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	3
How well are children helped to stay safe?	3
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	3
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

Detail of the complaint/s

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration or the last inspection.

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.