

# Poppies Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** EY217430  
**Inspection date** 16/10/2008  
**Inspector** Michele Messaoudi

**Setting address** St Mary's Lower School, Rook tree Lane, STOTFOLD,  
Bedfordshire, SG5 4DL

**Telephone number** 07833927906

**Email**

**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).

## Description of the setting

Poppies Nursery is privately managed. It was registered in 1998 and moved to its current premises in 2002. It is located in a single storey pre-fabricated building within the grounds of St Mary's Lower School in Stotfold, near Hitchin, Hertfordshire. There is one main room which is divided into two separate areas according to activity. Children have access to a secure outside play area. A maximum of 64 children may attend the nursery at any one time. It is open during school term-time and sessions are daily from 09:00 to 11:30 and from 12:30 to 15:00, with a lunch club between 11:30 and 12:30. There are currently 101 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 65 children receive funding for nursery education. The majority of children come from the local area. The nursery currently supports children who have learning, emotional or linguistic needs. Most children move up to the Reception class of St Mary's Lower School and others go to Roecroft Lower School. The nursery liaises with the local primary schools to ensure children's smooth transition to reception.

The setting employs 19 staff. Ten of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. Nine staff are working towards a qualification. The setting is on the Early Years Register. This provision also operates Poppyfields Nursery close by and the group is accredited through the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PSLA) accreditation scheme. Poppies Nursery received the Healthy School Award from the Primary Healthcare Trust in July 2008. It fulfils its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

## Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Poppies Nursery is highly effective in maintaining its outstanding provision. It has perfected systems that ensure that each child's uniqueness is clearly identified and nurtured, and their emotional and physical needs are met well. Consequently, all children make exceptionally good progress in their learning and development in relation to their varying starting points. This is achieved through exemplary partnerships with parents and outside agencies that help maintain a very high level of care and education, and through inspirational leadership. The leaders foster a dynamic culture of continuous self-evaluation and improvement and manage quality assurance very effectively so that each child's full potential is achieved in a warm and excitingly evolving creative environment.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- further develop the use of information and communication technology (ICT) as acknowledged by the self review of the nursery

## **The leadership and management of the early years provision**

The manager has exceptionally high aspirations for excellence and ensures that the already very effective systems, that are in place to provide high quality education and care, are implemented consistently in each session and constantly refined. Strategic planning is informed by robust self-evaluation based on a wide range of evidence including frequent surveys of parents' views. In addition, there are annual appraisal of staff's performance and identification of their training needs. Planning is shaped by up-to-date knowledge of educational issues and changes in legislation. It is inspired by ongoing careful reflection on how to best improve existing practice, a genuine thirst for ever broadening the practitioners' outlook and professional knowledge. There is a commitment to inclusion and an enthusiasm for innovation and creativity.

In the last few months, the planning of the curriculum has evolved to follow the needs of the individual child even more closely. The manager is eager to develop new ideas from other outstanding settings as well as educational research. The range of positive images displayed around the nursery includes fathers as well as minority ethnic groups and results in all parents feeling welcomed. The manager has updated the various policies to ensure that all the new Early Year Foundation Stage (EYFS) welfare requirements are met and continue to provide high quality care. The procedures in place to safeguard children comply with the latest legislation and all staff are well informed of their duties and responsibilities. Consequently, children show a very high level of emotional well-being because they feel safe and respected, to the extent that it was impossible to distinguish the children who had just started from the others.

Resources are used very effectively to provide a learning environment that enables each child to engage in learning through play. The nursery has termly meetings with St Mary's Lower School to ensure the smooth transition of children going to the reception class. It works in partnership with the local schools to promote consistency in the teaching of reading skills. There are very useful induction procedures in place to ensure parents familiarise themselves gradually with all aspects of their partnership with the nursery.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision**

Poppies Nursery places a strong emphasis on fostering children's personal development and well-being. The staff create a warm and welcoming environment in which all children flourish and form very positive relationships with each other and with adults. They are taught to share, take turns and cooperate. They are encouraged to do things independently, including using the washing facilities. Children know how to stay safe when using equipment, climbing or running about. The staff engage actively with children and make sure all those present during a particular activity are included in the conversation. The nursery radiates warmth and care. The provision of a secure environment and fostering of independence have a positive impact on children's attitudes and well-being, and their behaviour is exemplary throughout the sessions. They are happy, friendly and polite.

Children enjoy a vibrant curriculum presented through a loosely thematic approach and a meticulous preparation of the environment. This allows them to make their own decisions, experiment and revisit their learning in hands-on and practical ways. Very careful planning of activities is informed by detailed observations of each child's achievement and identification of individual needs, interests and aptitudes. The records of children's learning are sent home daily to strengthen the partnership with parents.

The learning environment always includes quiet areas to suit the children's varying emotional needs. As a result, children move freely between the outdoor and indoor environment and get absorbed in a great variety of activities. They select the resources which they judge necessary for their play, not realizing how much they are learning. They experience reading under a 'cosy tent' which they help set up outside or in a reading corner indoors. They draw letters in sand, fashion them with play dough or write their name on art work. A multitude of activities helps children to recognize patterns. They learn about the world around them through 'pretend' games, for example by making 'traffic lights' with crackers and vegetables, 'hammering' imaginary nails into planks in 'Poppies' yard'. They 'cook and bake' using real kitchen equipment and play dough, build a new house by digging in the sand pit with a toy digger. They develop fine language skills by going 'on a bear hunt' from the playground to the wilder area next to it, that enables them to experience features of a wilderness. Children learn to count candles on a cake or bricks in a wheelbarrow. They are encouraged to develop an appreciation of the natural world by using a wide range of natural resources and going on nature walks. They take competent photographs of themselves and others. Although children have opportunities to use computers, this area is not as developed as it could be and this is recognised by the leaders who have made staff training in information and communication technology an ongoing area for development.

The staff are extremely skilful at 'following the child', respecting individuals' decisions and turning every opportunity into a learning experience. For example, when children have their snack, they show a high level of competence when cutting up the fruit with a real knife. They learn through discussion what constitutes healthy eating and what does not. They demonstrate that they can apply skills learnt earlier to a new situation using different materials. For example, some children playing in the sand pit made pretend cakes and candles using different size moulds showing a good understanding of the shape and position of a candle and of its proportion in relation to the cake. A girl decided to apply a printing technique when putting butter on a cracker. Through this, she learnt about the effectiveness of her chosen method compared with spreading butter with a knife, which she then tried. The staff ask open-ended questions that encourage children to think, solve problems and express their views. In turn, children display a lot of confidence and self-esteem as they feel valued. Parents say that their children talk enthusiastically about their school activities at home and look forward to going each morning. Children who have emotional, learning or linguistic needs are very well supported by the staff who follow excellent procedures consistently to identify their needs and meet them closely.

As a direct consequence of the outstanding curriculum and learning environment and support, most children exceed the nationally expected levels by the time they move up to reception.

## 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

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	1
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	1

### Leadership and management

<b>How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	1
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	1
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	1

### Quality and standards

<b>How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?</b>	1
<b>How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?</b>	1
How well are children helped to stay safe?	1
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	1
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

## **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 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.