

Puddleducks

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY218008
Inspection date	04/02/2009
Inspector	Jan Leo
Setting address	30a High Street, Croughton, Brackley, Northamptonshire, NN13 5LT
Telephone number	01869 811222
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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

Puddleducks day nursery opened in March 2002 and operates from a single storey building in the centre of the village of Croughton in the extreme south of Northamptonshire. It is run by a private provider and a maximum of 34 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 8:00 to 18:00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. Children attend from Croughton and the surrounding villages.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. There are currently 58 children in the early years age range on roll. The nursery receives government funding for the provision of free early education for children from two to four years of age.

The nursery employs 11 staff to work with the children and of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications to level 2 or above, and three are working towards a nationally recognised qualification.

The setting receives support from the local authority and is developing links with schools and other carers associated with the children who attend.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. Rigorous recruitment, monitoring and development systems result in the nursery operating very effectively in all areas. The management is exceptionally strong at developing links with parents and carers and they continue to build relationships with local schools and pre-schools as part of their continuous development programme. The family style approach to care ensures children get to know everyone at the setting well, but the lunch time staffing arrangements currently interrupt the continuity of key worker relationships. Staff and management work very closely together, constantly striving to evaluate and improve practice both on a day-to-day level and through a detailed and thorough long term plan of improvements. As a result, the children benefit from a generally well planned and delivered balanced curriculum which helps them become enthusiastic learners and develop skills for the future within small groups.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review staff deployment to minimise staffing changes over the lunch time period and avoid disruption of the key worker relationships
- develop planning by identifying specific aims for each child to ensure all staff know how to help children progress on an individual basis.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The management is very skilled in developing processes to ensure the nursery is a professional and effective setting that meets the needs of all who use the service. All paperwork is very clear and information is easily available to families to keep them up-to-date and ensure they feel part of their children's development. Strong links with other child carers, used by the children who attend, help create a valuable two way flow of information. This enables the staff to build a complete picture of each child's life in order to enhance what they do elsewhere. An open door policy is in operation, with daily informal discussion between key worker and collecting adults, regular parent's evenings and a comments box to encourage adults to be involved in their children's day. This openness enables staff to adapt their care to suit children's ever changing needs and help them feel welcome and secure.

The staff take part in a thorough induction process to become familiar with policies and practice during an initial period of two months close supervision while they settle in. They routinely attend training in, for example, first aid and child protection to equip them with the skills to safeguard children from harm and they are fully aware of their responsibility to refer concerns to the Safeguarding Authority if they arise.

The management has some very precise routines for monitoring daily practice and diligently carries them out in order to maintain high standards. These spot checks, along with successful evaluation of procedures, helps the provider successfully identify areas for improvement and she works closely with her dedicated staff team to find workable solutions. This effective team work helps staff stay up-to-date with current practice and feel able to contribute to the effectiveness of the setting. All have a very good understanding of the registration requirements and willingly assist in different rooms to maintain ratios in all areas during the lunch time period. However, the key worker system currently operates without a 'buddy' being identified to ensure children have someone close to bond with at all times. As a result, while they show no sign of distress, some have fewer opportunities for closeness with a favourite adult during the middle of the day.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

The children follow good practice to develop a healthy lifestyle and become independent from an early age. They manage their personal care very well, finding and donning their outdoor clothes before going out to play, and freely choosing what to do and where to go with increasing confidence. The nursery has maintained standards in order to retain a healthy eating award for a fifth year and they routinely cater for special diets. Children have regular access to outdoor play to benefit from fresh air while developing their physical skills and experiencing outdoor learning. They enjoy positioning crates together to walk along and steering sit and ride toys around the playground. The staff take all areas of learning outside and they make good use of the small space to display children's paintings for visitors to see as they arrive on site, valuing what children do.

The staff operate the nursery as if it is a large family, welcoming the children that wander in from other rooms and greeting them cheerfully before entering into discussion about the things that are important to them. The children know what staff expect and they follow the routine willingly. Some new children join in with actions as they sing at the table while waiting for lunch, demonstrating the ease with which they pick up the routine and fit in. The older children chat sociably together as they mimic what adults do and act out their own past experiences. For example, some speak quietly while patting dollies gently on the back to get them to sleep after tucking them snugly under a blanket for an afternoon nap. The children develop a strong sense of community because all staff have a genuine caring approach and help children celebrate their differences to ensure they feel special.

The children learn about the modern world by exploring what they see around them, welcoming visitors from different community roles and using equipment such as a laminator and digital camera. The staff encourage families to contribute their expertise and ideas when following topics such as the Chinese New Year, providing opportunities for children to participate in a broad range of related activities to develop a wider understanding of the Chinese way of life. All children behave very well and eagerly participate in activities alone or with friends. Staff encourage their free play and join in without inhibition to develop ideas and bring in other areas of learning. The staff know the children well and plan a varied and appropriate programme to help different age groups develop. However, the plans do not currently identify specific aims for individual children and as a result, only the key workers have a firm understanding of how to move their children on. During the key workers absence, children receive less valuable interaction from other staff and miss some potential learning opportunities.

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?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	1

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
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?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
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

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met

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.