



Puffins of Exeter Child Care Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY300251
Inspection date	24 November 2005
Inspector	Janet Butlin / Heather Morgan
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Registered person	Puffins of Exeter Ltd
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Puffins of Exeter Ltd has been established since 1990 and is situated in a residential area of Heavitree, near to the city centre of Exeter. The nursery is privately owned and one of eight nurseries in the Puffins of Exeter group, managed by two partners from head office. They are registered to provide care for 40 children up to the age of 5 years.

The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 07.30 until 18.00, 51 weeks of the year.

There are currently 48 children on the register, of whom 21 are in receipt of funding. Children with special educational needs and English as an additional language are supported.

The nursery occupies a large semi-detached, Georgian, four-storey house where the children are cared for in three groups, each with its own dedicated staff team. Children under the age of three years are accommodated on the ground floor, while those aged three and above have separate facilities and their own entrance on the lower level. Kitchen facilities provide the nursery with daily cooked meals. Management and administrative staff work on the first floor. Included in the registration is an enclosed back garden.

The nursery employs a team of 14 staff, of these 9 hold a relevant child care qualification and 5 are working towards a recognised certificate in child care and education.

The nursery receives the support of the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn good hygiene routines and develop an awareness about keeping themselves healthy as they wash their hands before meals and clean their hands carefully afterwards. They play in a hygienic environment where all surfaces are scrupulously cleaned. All necessary systems are in place to ensure continuity of care and to enable staff to respond appropriately in an emergency.

The nursery is comfortably warm at the start of the day but becomes a little cool in the afternoon.

Children enjoy a healthy and nutritious diet and fresh fruit is provided in plentiful quantities. They are able to access a drink whenever they want one which ensures they remain well hydrated.

Children enjoy regular opportunities to be physically active and benefit from the fresh air as they play outdoors every day, weather permitting. They develop a good awareness of space as they move carefully around the environment, practising balancing skills such as walking on tip-toe. They also develop their large muscles effectively using a variety of apparatus such as wheeled toys, parachutes and balls. The enclosed rear garden is planted to provide sufficient shade to protect children from the harmful effects of the sun.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a well organised environment and have sufficient space to play and

rest. They enjoy a secure outside play area and there is an effective and secure system of access to the premises. Children access a range of appropriate resources very easily. All toys and equipment are in good condition.

Children's safety is promoted as the nursery has developed a personalised system of risk assessing the premises, however, these risk assessments have not identified potential weaknesses in the method of recording the attendance of staff, for example when the computer system fails. Particularly good attention is given to practising and evaluating evacuation procedures and this strengthens children's understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Children's safety is further promoted by staff's secure understanding of the child protection procedure.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are happy, settled and very well supported at all times. They benefit from the practitioners' exemplary understanding of the Birth to Three Matters framework and staff use it extremely well to plan worthwhile activities for children's individual development. This is augmented by the highly effective use of schemas. This ensures that staff are fully aware of children's individual styles and preferences. This means that activities are adapted to ensure that all children enjoy them. Resources are always available that will stimulate the children and appeal to their individual needs. Children engage totally with their playthings and interact animatedly with their playmates and adults who are caring for them.

Nursery Education:

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning. Staff demonstrate a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum to promote learning through everyday routines and spontaneous play opportunities, for example, using effective methods of questioning to encourage children to work things out for themselves when making dinosaur masks.

Staff plan experiences that arise from children's interests, therefore children are well-engaged and have a positive attitude towards participating in available activities. They are happy, confident and settle quickly to play well together. Simple techniques, such as measuring time spent on computer with a sand timer, helps them to self manage fair turn-taking. Children respond well to praise and encouragement and their behaviour is good.

Staff use a range of effective strategies to create a calm, positive learning environment. Attractive displays of children's work create a welcoming, stimulating environment and children are proud of their achievements. Staff plan a wide range of activities that support learning in all six areas of learning. There is a good focus on encouraging children's curiosity and giving them opportunities to explore and investigate natural and made resources and to learn through practical exploration. Daily routines are used effectively to develop children's awareness of number. They can count confidently, recognise numerals and use familiar numbers appropriately in

their everyday conversation, for example, commenting on how old they are.

Regular observations of children at play are evaluated to develop staff's awareness of children's interests and abilities. These observations are used effectively to make early identification of any special needs but are not systematically linked to the stepping-stones in order to track and ensure steady progress. High adult ratios enable staff to provide good support to children and they are deployed well to support children's individual play choices.

Children are developing their independence, for example by pouring drinks, sometimes serving lunch and making independent choices. However, sometimes pace and routine limits individual choice. Children engage in lively conversations and speak confidently in group situations; they enjoy mark-making for a variety of different purposes and many are learning to form letters correctly. Children are interested in letters and the sounds they make and they enjoy exploring rhyming words.

Children have regular opportunities to play outdoors and develop their large muscle skills using a range of equipment but the limited reference to the stepping stones reduces staff's ability to ensure steady progress in this area. Children have good hand-eye co-ordination and are learning to use equipment such as scissors, knives and forks with increasing control.

Children enjoy imaginative play, they use resources such as small world and dressing up clothes to enhance and develop their play. Children enjoy exploring the sounds that musical instruments make and sometimes use dance to interpret different styles of music. Although children often engage in planned opportunities to explore and experiment with paint and recyclable materials, they do not regularly choose to do this spontaneously.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are known and respected and the nursery promotes children's awareness of cultural diversity in meaningful ways. Children learning English as an additional language are well supported and there is effective liaison with parents to meet children's needs and promote their sense of self.

Children with special needs benefit from appropriate support and the nursery seeks the advice and guidance of local supporting agencies. Staff learn skills, such as signing, to further enhance their practice in this area.

Children are confident, and extremely well behaved. They benefit from staff's positive role-modelling and they are learning to say please and thank-you as appropriate. Effective strategies enable children to understand that behaving appropriately makes a positive contribution to everyone else's enjoyment.

Children arrive happily and settle well. They show high levels of concentration and work well independently as well as in groups. They are sensitive to each other's needs, for example helping a playmate to understand how the computer works. They

are also working out how to manage their own time which helps them share popular toys. Children's spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is fostered.

There is a good partnership with parents. Children benefit from being cared for in accordance with their parents' wishes. There is a good system of communication which ensures that parents are kept informed regarding children's day-to-day care and also how they are developing and learning. The method of sharing information regarding the Foundation Stage is being developed, particularly how children are progressing along the stepping stones.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from being cared for in a well organised environment and by suitable people, good systems are in place to ensure this. Good use is made of the available space, which is well organised so that children can enjoy their time at the nursery. Thorough systems are in place to record the attendance of all on the premises, however, the method of recording the attendance of staff is vulnerable to unpredicted failure, this means there may be a delay in securing the information required to protect children. Children's records are in place, stored securely and all regulatory documentation is in place. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management are good. Several tiers of management work well together to ensure that the provision of nursery education is effectively monitored. The planning and assessment system is also monitored and making closer links to the stepping stones is an identified area for improvement. Some progress has been made in this area. The lead practitioner is a good role-model and provides good direction to staff. There is a strong commitment to improvement and staff are supported in their professional development.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

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.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop risk assessments to ensure that the system of recording staff's attendance is secure

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- improve the assessment system to make it clear how the children are progressing along the stepping stones

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