

Pixieland Stoke

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 117142
Inspection date 18/05/2010
Inspector Leorna Mathias

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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 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.

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Description of the setting

Pixieland Stoke Village is a privately owned nursery, which is one of a small chain of nurseries in the Plymouth and Cornwall area. The nursery opened in August 2000. It operates from a detached property in Stoke, a residential area of Plymouth. It serves a wide catchment area.

There are currently 130 children from birth to under five years on roll. This includes 46 children receiving funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The nursery is open from 7.00 am to 6.00 pm, Monday to Friday, all year round and only closes during Christmas week and on Bank Holidays.

The nursery employs 25 staff who work directly with the children, plus a cook and cleaners. Of these staff 18 hold appropriate childcare qualifications, including two who are working towards a degree, and 13 with a level three qualification in childcare and education. Currently seven staff are working towards a relevant qualification. The setting receives support from the Local Authority, Family Services. It is a member of the National Day Nurseries Association.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are well cared for in a nursery where safety and security are prioritised. They enjoy a pleasing range of activities throughout the day, including very regular access to outdoor play with good quality equipment. Staff and resources are well deployed, and children benefit from warm relationships between themselves and the adults who look after them. There is a genuine partnership between parents and nursery staff. A positive start has been made in regard to evaluating the quality of care and educational delivery, and while there is more to be done in this area, there is a clear commitment to team working and the whole staff team's professional development.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- increase children's access to books that can be used independently
- ensure the individual rest needs of all children are fully met
- increase the rigour of observations and assessments of children's progress, and continue to develop systems which facilitate the regular evaluation of adult practice.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare is effectively safeguarded through a broad range of measures. Access to the premises is closely monitored through a fingerprint recognition system and CCTV. Risk assessments are thorough, and daily safety and hygiene checks are meticulously carried out across the nursery. Planning for emergencies such as fire are well established, with fire drills a regular feature of nursery life. Similarly, staff are well prepared for dealing with child protection concerns. The child protection officer is clear about the action she should take when issues arise. The whole team receives regular training in this area, and all are familiar with the appropriate and regularly reviewed safeguarding policy.

The nursery staff succeed in working closely with the families of cared for children. They ensure a good amount of information about the nursery's day-to-day running is available through detailed notice boards and regular newsletters. Parental feedback is sought through questionnaires and suggestion boxes, and key workers make time each day to share the events of each child's day with parents and carers both verbally and through written home diaries. Parents evenings are regular, and the nursery continues to seek out ways of involving parents further in their child's learning and developmental progress. A significant number of parents took the time to contribute positive views of the care their child receives during the inspection process. The nursery team also works hard at forming purposeful relationships with other agencies in order to further their work. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, for example, readily accesses outside professional input for children needing additional support. Children's transition to school is facilitated through the maintenance of good communication channels with the Foundation Stage teachers in the local primary schools.

The nursery has a large staff team, all of whom are meaningfully involved in evaluating the nursery's work. Recommendations from the last inspection were positively responded to, leading to improvements in both the quality of documentation and of adult practice in certain key areas. Regular team meetings, and opportunities to share practice with staff members in their sister nurseries, are all used to encourage every adult working with children to reflect upon planning and delivery. The senior management team demonstrate the capacity to identify most weaknesses, as well as the motivation to bring about improvements. For example, an evaluation of the resources and furniture used by children led to a decision to increase the quantity of items that use natural materials, such as wood, throughout the building. However, the team also acknowledges that self-evaluations of daily adult practice are not yet systematically carried out, which may at times limit their capacity to continue building on the quality of the provision. Nevertheless, their strong commitment to improving the qualification profile of the staff team, both through recruitment and support for training, does bring ongoing benefits for cared for children, as will the completion of a recently begun, externally-audited quality assurance programme.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals in all six areas of learning. Babies and very young children enjoy exploring materials and resources, such as shredded paper, the ball pool, and specially designed sensory equipment. All children delight in regular access to the well designed outside play areas where they can use ride-on toys, sand, water, balls, hoops, role play resources and chalk board mark-making. As a result of this, and the opportunity to visit local outdoor places of interest, such as an eco-park, their physical skills are well promoted. Children also have regular opportunities to learn about the world around them in a variety of ways, which include visits from the Fire Brigade, Traffic Wardens and the Animal Man. They build creatively using large blocks, sustain their interest when using the doll's house or farmyard, and play imaginatively in the home and dressing up areas. A consistent use of an appropriate phonics programme enables children to develop their communication skills, and they listen well during story time, though their independent use of books is, at times, limited. Problem solving and access to information technology are a regular feature of planning, and encouraging children's independence and self esteem through verbal encouragement, the distribution of tasks through the group, and through inviting children to self select activities, is working well. Children are learning to consider others, through taking part in charitable fundraising events. An appropriate behaviour management policy is in place, and adults are consistent in encouraging children to give of their best, for example, by helping them to apologise when disputes have occurred. Throughout the nursery, children play co-operatively.

The staff team have embraced the Early Years Foundation Stage. They take incidental opportunities to promote children's learning and build warm and caring relationships with their charges. While some aspects of the rest needs of a small number of children are not presently being met in full, when taken overall, the individual needs of children are respected and promoted. Settling in procedures, both during the early days of attendance, and when moving to the next age-group area, are thorough. Very young children are calm and settled with their carers, and all children readily gravitate towards adults for attention, support and comfort. Space, resources and toys are well organised, and staff deployment successfully allows for children to be well supported and supervised throughout the day. Babies are cared for in a calm and homely environment, while older children have freedom to move in spacious and airy rooms. The staff team ensures that children access a broad range of activities at each session. Their skills of observation and assessment of children's progress are sound, and written records of these observations do identify the next steps in each child's learning and suggest strategies for their promotion. While at a less formal level it is clear that adults are thinking about how to promote children's understanding throughout the day, the frequency of such formal observations can vary a little, and the team have not yet established a process of routinely evaluating whether their ongoing interventions have indeed brought about the desired progress. Nevertheless, staff are enthusiastic about building on their skills, and work to integrate the guidance they receive from outside professionals as they undertake formal qualifications or receive visits from local Early Years Advisory Teachers.

Children enjoy healthy meals and snacks throughout the day. Information sharing around those with allergies or other special dietary requirements is thorough, and babies' individual routines are very much adhered to. Staff respond quickly to accidents and incidents, and documentation which supports the administration of medicines or medical treatment is in good order and used fully. Initiatives such as the Healthy Smiles project, aimed at maintaining good dental health, enable children to become increasingly independent in the management of their own health.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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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