

Tops Day Nurseries/Mini Mariners

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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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

Tops Day Nurseries/Mini Mariners registered in 2006 under new management. This nursery is part of a national chain. It operates from a portacabin within The Hydrographic Office site of the UK Ministry of Defence, Taunton, Somerset. The nursery cares for children of staff of the Hydrographic Office as well as the general public. The premises consist of one large playroom for children aged two to five years, who are grouped within this space as two to three year olds known as the 'Busy Bees' and pre-school aged children aged three to five, who are known as the 'Caterpillars'. There are toilet and kitchen facilities directly off the playroom. There is also a sensory room, which doubles as a sleep room and an office. An adjoining baby room with its own changing facilities and kitchen cares for up to nine babies under two years of age, these are known as the 'Ladybirds'. Each play room has its own access to outside play facilities, which comprise of a large tarmac area and a grass area. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register, although currently they only care for children in the early years age range. They are registered to care for a maximum of 35 children under eight years of age at any one time. The nursery are open Monday to Friday 8.00am until 6.00pm, all year round. There are currently 82 children on roll who attend on a part-time basis, 35 of these are funded three and four-year-olds. Overnight care is not included within the registration.

The nursery are managed by a management team from Tops Day Nurseries Bournemouth head office. The Mini Mariners manager who has a level 4 qualification in Early Years is supported by a deputy, who is also the supervisor of the 'Busy Bees' and two other room supervisors of the 'Caterpillars' and 'Ladybirds', all of whom hold level 3 qualifications. A further three staff hold level 3 qualifications, one holds a level 5 qualification and four hold level 2 qualifications, all in early years. Five staff are working towards a level 2 or 3 qualification. The nursery receive support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The setting has implemented the Early Years Foundation Stage very effectively to meet children's individual needs really well. All aspects of the learning and development requirements are well promoted and result in most outcomes for children being outstanding. However, links with other settings children attend have not yet been established. There is a very strong commitment to continuous improvement, especially through training and very proactive leadership and management. However, children's safety is compromised by parents not following procedures to maintain the security of the premises.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- build on existing practice to ensure all parents are vigilant about the need for improved security of the premises
- develop partnerships with other settings children attend, as well as those in which children move on to, in order to promote continuity by sharing relevant information

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Safeguarding children is given high priority by all staff. Everyone is aware of the procedures to follow in the event of being concerned about a child and who the designated person is. Comprehensive safeguarding policies are shared with parents and staff to ensure everyone is aware of their role and responsibilities. However, on the day of inspection the inspector was let into the setting by parents, which compromises children's safety. Although there are excellent systems in place to safeguard children, such as a security system at the gate with CCTV and staff having to let visitors in who buzz, this gate is regularly held open by parents. Staff have tried many ways to deal with this ongoing weakness with reminders to parents in newsletters and signing an agreement on admission to abide by the rules, such as closing the gate behind them and not holding open for other visitors. The management immediately put into action ways to further address the situation when they are aware of this safety incident, which shows an excellent commitment to ongoing improvement. All other aspects of children's safety are identified and addressed in an exemplary way. Thorough risk assessments of the inside and outside environment are carried out several times a day. These, along with children's accidents, are recorded and analysed on a regular basis, fed back to the designated health and safety officer for attention and passed on to head office for any action.

The leadership and management is extremely effective at embedding ambition and driving improvement. There is a strong feeling of hierarchy in the nursery, ensuring that staff at all levels are appropriately monitored and supported. For example, the nursery manager is extremely well supported by the management team based at head office, who with the support of the deputy and room supervisors run a smooth team. Staff are well monitored, mentored and supported to complete training and develop their knowledge. There are effective meetings at all levels and excellent communication systems ensure children's individual needs are met by all staff. There is a strong commitment to ongoing training and all recommendations from the previous inspection have been addressed extremely well. The setting's self-evaluation is a true reflection of their practice and identifies their own areas for continued improvement as they are always striving to further develop their practice.

The organisation of the different age groups is very effective, with a separate room for babies for the majority of the day but coming together for mealtimes with the older children, to develop their social skills. A very stimulating and welcoming environment promotes children's learning across all areas for all ages. Staff deploy

themselves and the resources in an outstanding way to further meet children's individual needs both inside and outside. Boys and girls have equal access to all resources but staff are very clear about the need to treat every child as an individual and promote equality and diversity in all they do. Children from different cultures have their individual needs understood and met very effectively. The organisation of documentation is also exemplary, with everything at hand and highly professional. Parents are encouraged to take responsibility for signing their own children in and out on clearly laid out, daily attendance sheets and given a wealth of information via the notice board, newsletters, policies and procedures. They also have duplicate systems for recording babies' routines to share with parents and are involved in every aspect of their children's Learning Journey files. For example, on admission and at regular intervals parents are asked about their children's likes, interests, routine and development to help plan for their next steps.

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

Babies and children are extremely happy, settled and engaged with their peers and the staff in a range of exciting activities. For example, babies enjoy exploring the sand in low level trays outside in the sunshine, with lots of adult support and interaction. They also enjoy playing on a one-to-one basis with staff in the shade of a tent and practise their physical skills, such as walking. Toddlers and pre-school aged children have a strong feeling of belonging to their own group regardless of being in one room together. There are times when they all benefit from free-play as one large group and other times when they split according to age and stage of development to engage in different activities, such as stories before lunch. Babies and children thoroughly enjoy celebrating festivals, such as Maypole dancing to music as a whole group. A girl and a boy from each age group dress up as Kings and Queens and are made to feel very important, which builds their self-confidence. Staff interact with all ages, which helps aid their smooth transition from one room to another as they progress through the nursery. Children are also encouraged to learn the names of their peers from other groups, which aids their social development.

Children enjoy making choices in their play and greatly benefit from the activities being child-initiated and child-led. For example, children spontaneously decide to make crowns for their Maypole celebrations. They are each individual and unique as they are able to make them how they wish. They are supported and encouraged to make their own from start to finish with minimal adult intervention so they learn and develop new skills, such as drawing a straight line and cutting along it, decorating it how they wish and wearing it with pride. Children greatly benefit from not being rushed to complete tasks and progress at their own speed. Babies and children learn to sign their basic needs, which not only meets individual needs but promotes inclusion. Babies and children's learning is observed by staff through a variety of observations, such as photographs, 'wow' notes and observation stickers. These are used to complete assessments on their progress, linked to the six areas of learning and the early learning goals.

Babies and children benefit greatly from daily outside play, whatever the weather. They have large spaces to run around in, play on wheeled toys and be active. Babies and children are well protected in the sun due to the staff's commitment to applying their own sun-creams from home twice a day and waiting 20 minutes before playing outside to allow it to work. They also ensure everyone wears sun hats, that they do not go outside during the midday sun and utilise the shade wherever possible. Babies and children enjoy regular food and drinks. Snacks are healthy and meals are home-made and nutritious, incorporating fresh fruit wherever possible. Children are encouraged to spread their own toppings on crackers from a young age, serve their own food from dishes on the table at lunch time and pour their own drinks, all helping to develop their self-care skills and independence. Children independently use the toilet and wash their hands, responding positively to staff asking to smell their hands afterwards to check they have used soap as a way of ensuring they are thorough. Children are also involved in helping to clean the tables prior to eating, which develops their awareness of good hygiene.

Babies and children show a good sense of security and feel safe in the setting. Babies care needs are particularly well understood, which means they settle from parents well, eat and sleep well. They feel secure with a member of staff always present as they sleep and when they join the larger, noisy room for meals. They move into the next age group with a clear, well established hand over from one key person to another further promoting children's safety and security. Children learn how to use tools such as knives and scissors with careful monitoring and understand the rules and boundaries to keep them safe, such as not entering the kitchen and they sensibly wait at the doorway as they help staff to lay the table for snack, carrying water jugs and plates carefully. This shows how they play an active part in their learning, which equips them with fundamental skills for the future. All of their efforts and achievements are praised and acknowledged, which makes them confident and self-assured.

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	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
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	3
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	1
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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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