

Munchkins

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

EY299719

Inspection date

26/05/2010

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

Munchkins was registered in 2004. It is privately owned, the co-proprietors also own another setting in an adjacent building in the same grounds, which has a separate registration. Both settings work closely together, sharing a senior management team. A total of 17 members of staff are employed to work with children, 16 of whom hold professional early years qualifications.

Munchkins operates from a large Victorian house in the St Leonard's area of Exeter. Accommodation is arranged over three floors providing a base for children aged from one year to under three years of age. There is an enclosed garden for outdoor play. Children aged under one year, and of pre-school age, are cared for in the adjacent setting.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 60 children may attend at any one time, all of whom may be in the early years age range. There are currently 100 children in this age group attending at different times. The setting is open each weekday from 7.45am to 6pm all year round. Overnight care is not provided.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children's individual needs are met very well. Staff develop extremely good relationships with parents and other professionals involved in supporting individual children. This results in extremely effective systems of sharing information that promote children's welfare. Children experience an inclusive environment where they make consistently good progress in learning and development relative to their individual starting points. Self-evaluation within the setting is good, resulting in well targeted action plans that focus on achieving and sustaining high quality outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- enable children to obtain a positive sense of their own identity and culture by reviewing how the learning environment can be used more effectively to reflect the languages and cultures of children based in each room within the setting
- ensure that children have sufficient opportunities to learn about, and practise, the setting's emergency evacuation procedures, so that they develop a meaningful understanding of how to keep themselves safe in the event of a fire; and ensure there is a clear record of when fire drills have taken place.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Management within the setting is very effective and has resulted in a confident staff team who have a good understanding of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is demonstrated in the effectiveness with which staff implement safeguarding procedures, to ensure children remain protected from harm. Staff are secure in their knowledge of issues that may raise concerns regarding abuse or neglect and they demonstrate a thorough understanding of Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures in addition to the setting's own policies. Robust employment procedures and systems of checks ensure staff are suitable to work with children. Risk assessments are extremely thorough and take account of all areas. For instance, the setting is over several floors and there are strict routines to ensure children are able to move safely between different areas. Any outings have a separate risk assessment. Generally, safety and security is supported very well. Access to the premises is strictly monitored and visitors are supervised at all times.

All regulatory documentation is in place and overall maintained effectively. Rotas are organised to give key staff, such as those supporting children with specific learning and development needs, periods of one-to-one time with individual children. Policies and procedures are clear and informative, and shortened versions of these are included in the parents' information pack. Staff have identified that some parents would appreciate these, and other information, being available to them in languages other than English, and are currently working towards achieving this. There are some weaknesses in documentation, for example, inconsistent recording of emergency evacuation procedures.

The very effective management team have successfully promoted a culture of reflective practice within the setting where staff show commitment to evaluating their practice. They are extremely well motivated, responding well to 'team challenges' that encourage them to identify projects that will directly benefit children. For example, staff have recently developed an area where children can grow fruit, vegetables and flowers. They involved children in planning how the beds would be organised and choosing the different plants to grow. Children help to care for the plants and this project has enhanced their awareness of the natural world. Self-evaluations are thoughtful and regularly revisited at team meetings, and so remain a meaningful tool for future planning. Parents have responded well to having their views consulted and these are included in development plans.

Partnerships with parents and carers are excellent. Parents receive very high quality information about all aspects of the setting, and most is available in either paper or electronic format according to their preferences. Settling in procedures enable parents to get to know key staff involved in caring for their children and ensure staff are well informed regarding children's routines and preferences. Daily discussions and good use of individual diaries ensure staff remain well informed, for instance, as children become more independent, and so can ensure support is consistent with that provided by parents. The setting uses a monitoring system

that parents can access through a secure internet link in order to reassure themselves that their children are safe and happy. Staff develop extremely good relationships with others involved in supporting individual children. For example, children who have specific learning and development needs benefit from the excellent sharing of information that leads to consistent planning and enables them to make good progress.

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

Children's welfare, learning and development are supported well. Children are kept safe and secure at all times. They develop a good awareness of how to use resources and equipment safely, for instance, at meal times very young children use knives to carefully slice and cut vegetables and fruit. Safety procedures such as fire drills are conducted with children, and these are often arranged to provide staff with particular challenges, such as evacuating very young children who are resting. However, emergency evacuation practices are not organised to ensure that all children have regular opportunities to participate, and therefore children do not gain a meaningful understanding of how to conduct themselves in the event of a fire or emergency situation.

Health promotion with children is extremely good. Children develop a clear understanding of the importance of personal hygiene and are supported well as they learn to manage their needs independently. Children thoroughly enjoy the excellent variety of activities that encourage them to develop a very good awareness of how their bodies work. They enthusiastically join in games such as 'sleeping lions' and action rhymes such as 'wind the bobbin up', where they move faster and slower. They energetically use hula-hoops and control their movements very well. Children immensely enjoy outdoor play and show very good awareness of the risk of sunburn and dehydration. For example, very young children playing outside in the sunshine are observed to take regular cool drinks and to quickly replace their sun hats when they fall off during active play.

Children make good progress towards the early learning and development goals relative to their starting points. This is because they benefit from a confident and skilled staff team who use their very good knowledge of individual children to provide a wide variety of learning opportunities that are challenging and promote individual development. Processes of monitoring children's progress in each area of learning are good. Staff throughout the setting make very good observations of children and use these extremely effectively to identify their individual stages of development. Records of children's achievements provide good evidence of their progress towards the early learning and development goals, and the next steps in children's individual plans are identified.

Children are eager and enthusiastic learners. They benefit from extremely good planning that ensures they enjoy free access to a very good range of equipment without being overwhelmed, enabling them to learn to make appropriate choices. For example, young children use a variety of resources that develop their confidence in the use of everyday technology. They progress from simple

interactive toys to using remote controlled trucks and cars, and thoroughly enjoy learning to use programmable keyboards and drum machines alongside traditional musical instruments. Active learners are supported very well and benefit from the very good use of outdoor areas as an extension of the learning environment. For example, children of all ages immensely enjoy conducting experiments with water and with staggered layers of pipes and guttering. They use their problem solving and critical reasoning skills as they discuss how quickly the water will cascade, and how they will catch and measure the amount coming through the pipes. Children learn about their own and other cultures and community, for example, by celebrating different customs and traditions throughout the year, and learning songs in each others' home languages'. However, children do not consistently see written examples of their home languages alongside English. For instance, most labelling is in English, and posters that do include other languages do not always represent those spoken by children in each base room.

Children are well behaved. They demonstrate high levels of self-esteem because they are secure that their individual needs will be met. Staff are good role models and they are consistently positive in their interactions with children. Staff make clear explanations to children regarding ground rules and children respond well to adults' high expectations, learning to be helpful and caring.

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	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	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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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	1
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
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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