



## Portico Poppets

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY314827
<b>Inspection date</b>	25 January 2006
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<b>Registered person</b>	Nicole Politis and Craig Jackson
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Portico Poppets Day Nursery opened in 2003, but re-registered in August 2005 following a change in the registered provider. It is one of two nurseries run by an informal partnership and operates from a single storey building situated in the Thatto Heath area of St Helens, Merseyside. Children are cared for within three rooms and share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery has neighbourhood nursery status and opens each weekday from 07.30 until 18.00 for 50

weeks of the year.

A maximum of 32 children may attend the provision at any one time and there are currently 58 children aged from birth to under 5 years on roll, of whom seven children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs eight staff of whom seven, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. The remaining staff member is working towards a recognised qualification.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Overall, children are cared for within a clean environment because staff have routines and procedures to ensure all areas used by the children are clean and tidy. The regular cleaning of toys, equipment and premises ensures children's health is considered. Children are aware of the need to wash their hands before and after certain activities, such as, after using the toilet or before meals and older children are able to undertake this task independently. Children's faces are washed after meals using individual face flannels and older children are encouraged to brush their teeth. However, children's health is compromised because staff do not consistently wipe tables or wash their hands before serving meals or snacks. Also, children's toilets are not checked frequently enough to ensure toilet tissue is available at all times, which further compromises children's health, hygiene and independence.

An appropriate sick child policy and procedure ensures staff are alert to children who might be feeling unwell and that any necessary arrangements and communication with parents and carers is made. Appropriate hygiene routines and procedures are employed by the cook when preparing meals and snacks, ensuring children are kept healthy and free from infection at all times.

Children's healthy eating is promoted through the provision of healthy snacks and meals. Children enjoy regular snacks and drinks throughout the day, which consist of the required intake of fruit and vegetables. Meals are freshly cooked each day and offer the children a balanced diet. Arrangements are in place to ensure that all children have access to drinking water throughout the day. Wherever possible, children are able to help themselves to drinks during their play through the provision of jugs, cups and water bottles. Mealtimes are conducted in a satisfactory manner; however, younger children's safety is compromised at mealtimes as they occasionally walk around whilst eating.

Staff have an understanding of the Birth to three framework, which is implemented across the nursery. They are beginning to plan and provide activities for this age range, in line with the framework.

## **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's safety and welfare is considered because staff have an understanding of the need to ensure children's safety. Children are cared for within areas that are organised according to age and rooms are prepared on a daily basis prior to the children's arrival. Children access a variety of activities and opportunities on a daily basis which are supported by suitable resources and equipment. They enjoy activities both indoor and outdoor, which contribute to their enjoyment and development. Staff make suitable use of the available space to provide the children with a range of learning and development opportunities. The use of subdued lighting within the baby room ensures that children are cared for within a calm environment.

Children access a satisfactory range of toys and equipment; this is continually being built upon to aid children's development and enjoyment. Babies and toddlers access toys and equipment placed close to them. Younger children are offered activities which relate to the Birth to three framework. Toys and equipment are checked regularly for safety and hygiene to ensure children's safety at all times.

Children are cared for within a safe and secure environment because staff follow appropriate policies and procedures and use relevant safety equipment. Risk assessments are conducted along with the regular checking of recorded accidents to ensure children's safety. Children learn to keep themselves safe through discussion with staff and gentle reminders, for example, not running indoors, during outdoor play and the safe use of tools and equipment. However, older children's safety and well-being is hindered by some aspects of children's challenging behaviour.

Children's welfare is given due consideration. Staff have an understanding of child protection policies and procedures and their responsibility in this area. An appropriate child protection policy is in place, which is shared with staff and available for parents and carers.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are learning and developing through a range of planned activities and opportunities, which help to promote their overall development and enjoyment. Staff have implemented the Birth to three framework and are developing planning in line with this. Children have access to activities which are supported by suitable resources to offer a range of play experiences, for example, very young children are involved in sensory experiences, such as jelly play, water play, and babies use a treasure basket and are able to see the effects of light boxes. Older children access suitable activities and equipment to aid their learning and development such as the use of magnets, play dough and free painting.

Children have opportunities to become competent learners through staff communication and interaction. However, staff working with toddlers and pre-school children are not always actively engaged with the children, which sometimes results

in them becoming distracted. The registered person and staff are committed to the implementation and development of the provision and use of both the Birth to three framework and the Curriculum guidance.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are generally happy and show willingness to learn. They are beginning to form positive relationships with staff and peers, as they learn to be kind to each other and to say sorry if they cause upset to another child. They develop some self care skills by visiting the toilet independently and brushing their teeth after meals. Children develop appropriate communication skills as they express their needs, chat to each other and mostly listen in small groups. They are able to recognise letters and sounds through activities like 'jolly phonics' and enjoy listening to stories and looking at books. However, they rarely access the writing table and they are not encouraged to make marks in other areas around the room.

Most children are able to count well. They enjoy making currant buns with the play dough, as they count how many currants are in the bun and join in with number rhymes. However, some children have difficulty in recognising numbers and have limited opportunities to learn about calculation and measurement. This is generally because mathematics is not used effectively in everyday situations. Children begin to learn about the wider world, for example, as they access the computer and as they learn about different cultures. They talk about people who are important to them, such as, grandparents and they develop a sense of time through nursery routines. However, they have limited opportunities to explore and investigate in their play.

Children's physical development is satisfactorily promoted. They have access to some physical play activities and have regular opportunities play outside. They are able to climb as they use a climbing frame, pedal as they use wheeled toys and run during outdoor play. They develop manipulative skills as they competently use paint brushes, complete jigsaws and use a computer keyboard and mouse. Children enjoy playing imaginatively, as they dress up as fire fighters and pretend to put out fires. Their interest is further developed by staff who suggest reading a story about fire fighters. Children are able to express themselves through a variety of media, such as musical instruments, free painting and as they listen to Chinese music. Their creative skills are mostly encouraged through different craft activities, for example, as they make Chinese dragons. However, the pre-school room lacks displays of children's artwork, which hinders their ability to feel proud of their achievements.

Staff working with funded children are qualified in childcare and generally provide appropriate support to help children learn. They have a basic knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage, but show willingness to develop their teaching skills, for example, by working with outside agencies and attending additional training. Staff offer a sufficient range of activities and experiences to support children's development across the six areas of learning. They carry out regular observations of the children, to monitor their progress and support their further development. Some systems are in place to plan and assess children's learning, but these lack sufficient detail. Short term plans are not linked to the early learning goals and have no clear learning objectives, which makes it difficult for all

staff to be clear about their role and the purpose of activities.

Staff try to encourage positive behaviour and acknowledge children's efforts through appropriate use of praise and encouragement. However, the organisation of the pre-school room does not promote a calm learning environment for children. Younger children are cared for in the same room and can sometimes display quite challenging behaviour. This is not always managed appropriately by staff, which can hinder children's concentration and ability to persevere at tasks. Staff do not use questioning skills effectively to help children think, which restricts their ability to develop and extend their knowledge.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are included in the activities provided; their individual needs and circumstances are known and provided for by staff, for example, staff working with babies and younger children establish individual children's routines for sleep and feeding with parents and carers. Children develop an understanding and awareness of their own environment and that of the wider world, as they look at other countries and festivals from around the world, for example, as they celebrate Chinese New Year and look at 'difference'. Children access some resources that promote their understanding of diversity. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's behaviour is satisfactory overall. They receive praise for their efforts, attempts and achievements. Staff communicate with parents and carers and seek advice from outside agencies to enable children with special needs to attend the nursery. However, challenging behaviour displayed by some children is not managed effectively by staff. At times, toddlers and pre-school children are not actively engaged in activities and as a result, they and other children become distracted and disruptive.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Staff develop positive relationships with parents and openly discuss issues relating to the children's care on a daily basis. There are some systems in place for keeping parents informed, such as newsletters, children's day books and access to nursery policies. An open day and a parents evening are planned for the near future. This helps to promote consistency in the children's care and ensures children are cared for according to parents. However, parents receive minimal information about the educational programme and about children's progress in their learning. Some information about activity plans are displayed, but these lack sufficient detail to enable parents to be involved and fully participate in children's learning.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The registered person shows commitment to the development of the staff group,

such as securing places on a number of appropriate training courses. This enables children to be cared for within an environment where staff are up-to-date with childcare initiatives. Regular staff meetings mean staff have opportunities to discuss relevant topics and ensure that they are working in a consistent way across the provision.

A high ratio of qualified staff work with the children on a daily basis. Detailed policies, procedures and an operational plan are in place to support childcare practice. All legally required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place and is appropriately maintained, but systems for recording accidents, incidents and the administration of medication compromises children's individual confidentiality.

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The manager is committed to raising standards in the nursery and promoting positive outcomes for children. She acts as a good role model and motivates staff by introducing systems to help them feel valued and supported, such as providing access to ongoing training and initiating schemes like 'staff of the month'. Staff and parents speak positively about several improvements made to the nursery, particularly in relation to the building and the range of resources available. Good links with outside agencies have been established to offer additional support and advice. Overall, this has had a positive impact on children's care and education. However, effective monitoring systems have not been fully implemented to address some of the areas for development in the quality of teaching and children's learning.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

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.

## **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION**

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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):

- improve staff hygiene practices regarding snack preparation, and make sure toilet paper is available in the children's toilets at all times
- ensure confidentiality is maintained when recording information about individual children
- ensure staff working with toddlers are actively engaged and supporting them in their activities and daily life. Develop staff's awareness and understanding of effective ways to manage children's behaviour and ensure that appropriate techniques and strategies are consistently applied.

### **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):

- develop staff knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage to improve the quality of teaching and planning for children's learning
- consider providing opportunities for funded children to undertake activities separate from younger children, to help with their concentration and overall progress in their learning
- ensure that parents are provided with good quality information about the curriculum and about children's progress in their learning
- review the organisation and balance of activities provided on a daily basis so that staff are effectively deployed and engaged in purposeful activities with the children.

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