

Portico Poppets

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date 26/10/2010
Inspector Margaret Mellor

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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*.

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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

Portico Poppets Day Nursery was registered in 2005 and is one of four provisions run by an informal partnership. It operates from a single-storey building situated in the Thatto Heath area of St Helens. Children are cared for within three rooms and share access to a secure fully enclosed outdoor play area. The setting primarily serves the local community.

The provision is registered to provide care for a maximum of 30 children on the Early Years Register at any one time. There are 74 children on roll. It is open each weekday from 8am to 6pm and provides a service for 50 weeks of the year. The staff support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The provision employs 10 staff to work with the children. They all have a relevant early years qualification to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 2 or 3; and one also has an early years foundation degree. Additional staff are employed for food preparation. They are supported by St Helens Borough Council and an early years educator. They provide funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-olds.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are cared for in a very vibrant, enabling and inclusive environment. They are very happy, their contribution is highly valued and they make very good progress in their development. Children are supported well by caring and knowledgeable staff who plan enjoyable activities. Good emphasis is given to safeguarding and welfare, although children's health and bodily awareness is not fully promoted. Meaningful and strong partnerships with parents and others is a key strength in ensuring that each child's individual needs are respected. The management team has taken good action to implement recommendations raised at the previous inspection and uses self-evaluation to identify areas for future development. This results in continuous quality improvement and a provision that is responding to the needs of all its users.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improve opportunities that develop children's understanding of health and bodily awareness.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's safety and welfare is promoted well within the provision. Staffing ratios are maintained and the qualified staff team ensure that children are supervised well. Sleeping children are vigilantly monitored and risk assessments, along with the staff vetting and recruitment procedures, are robust. The designated person understands their responsibilities for safeguarding children and the procedures to protect them from harm or neglect. Health and hygiene practices have improved as an outcome of the previous report. Therefore, the risk of cross-infection is minimised and children develop good personal hygiene. The provision has a healthy eating award and children are provided with freshly prepared meals, which are well balanced and nutritious. Policies are well written and fully support the safe and efficient running of the provision. They are made readily available to parents in the nursery prospectus.

High regard is given to ensuring an inclusive environment that welcomes all children. Settling in sessions are offered and 'All about me' booklets help the key person to form an initial assessment of the children. Therefore, children's individual needs are respected and they make very good progression in relation to their starting points. Staff take time to give parents feedback each day, and day diary sheets aid communication for the younger children. Monthly discussions with parents support children's interest in heuristic play at home. This ensures ongoing continuity of care and learning is complemented between the two environments. Parents say that they are very happy and satisfied with the quality of provision. The management and staff enjoy good partnerships with other professionals. Activities set by a speech and language therapist and parents aid staff in supporting children's individual needs. Strong links with other settings also support children's smooth transition to school.

Good organisation of the environment enables children to initiate their own play and learning across all areas of their development. The management team demonstrates ambitious vision and has made significant improvements since the last inspection. For instance, they have refurbished with good quality resources and additional windows have been added to brighten the environment. They are proactive in seeking the views of parents, staff and early years educator to inform self-evaluation and drive ambition forward. Therefore, key areas for future development include working on the 'Every Child A Talker' programme. Monthly staff meetings to share thinking across the age range further evidence their desire to promote better outcomes for the children. Good consideration is given to sustainability, evident through planting trees to attract wild life and recycling materials in craft activities.

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

Children are well cared for in a warm, clean environment and become aware of good personal hygiene through their natural daily routines. For instance, washing hands and brushing teeth after lunch is an enjoyable activity for them. Gentle encouragement helps babies to bear weight on their feet, which stimulates walking. Children develop their fine motor skills when eating freshly prepared tuna pasta and vegetables at lunch time with their fingers, spoons or forks. Active play in the fresh air is part of the continuous provision, which extends physical skills while helping them to adopt a healthy lifestyle. There is plenty of discussion about the eat-well plate and, before going out, children learn that they need to put Wellingtons on in wet weather. However, children have limited opportunities to extend their understanding of health and bodily awareness. For example, they do not talk about what they like to eat or discuss changes to their bodies after physical exercise.

Children eagerly engage in their play and good deployment of resources enables them to become very confident and active learners through hands on experiences. Young children begin to problem solve when fitting blocks into aeroplanes and babies communicate with gleeful chuckles in response to the facial expressions of staff. Children show awe and wonderment as the interactive voice recorders repeat the words they say. Developing skills on the computer extends their awareness of technology. All children love things that challenge their imagination. They respond with gusto while exploring sponges, pine cones or musical instruments and enjoy quiet times when snuggling up in the cosy sensory areas. Improved natural light enables children to observe the seasonal changes when playing indoors and their interest in living things is supported well. For instance, they make a house for the snails they discover and show care and concern when sprinkling them with water. Enjoyable walks in the local area further promote their knowledge and understanding of the world.

The staff highly value the children's work and create stimulating displays, which greatly contributes to the inviting environment. This makes children feel very proud of their achievements and this is reflected in their happiness and confidence. The staff also ensure all children are included and ideas, such as, enhancing sand play with cars, stimulate their participation and creativity. Continuity of care, a spontaneous hug and kind words of praise nurture children's emotional well-being. Contributing to the golden rules encourages older children to be safety conscious and mindful of others in play. Staff act as very good role models encouraging polite interaction. As a result, children are courteous, have kind hands and show respect for their environment when tidying away toys. Positive attitudes are enhanced through play with small world figures in wheelchairs and making rangoli patterns for Diwali. Staff teach children simple words in sign language, such as, 'hello'. Learning about people who help them, such as, the lollipop person, also promotes their awareness of keeping themselves safe.

Good key person support and activities with a focus on interests means that children have plenty of fun while making very good progress in their achievement.

Small group times help them to become aware of colour, shape and pattern. Simple counting, calculation and problem solving aids children's awareness of number. Mark making across the age range stimulates their creativity and name cards help them learn that print carries meaning. At circle time, kind words parents write about teddy's exploits at home, along with interactive boards, stimulate their conversation. Therefore, they talk and reflect on social events at home with confidence and use their imagination when extending endings at story time. The staff are also successfully using letters and sounds to encourage repetition of words. This supports individual children to become confident talkers. The assessment arrangements are good and the key person is using 'Progress Matters' to monitor their development toward the early learning goals. This helps staff to identify and plan for each child's next steps in learning to achieve their full potential and develop skills for the future.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	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	1
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