

# Monkey Puzzle Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

---

**Unique reference number**

EY412270

**Inspection date**

14/01/2011

**Inspector**

Tina Kelly

**Setting address**

The Old Station, London Road, ST. ALBANS, Hertfordshire,  
AL1 1JD

**Telephone number**

07930 686 322

**Email**

**Type of setting**

Childcare on non-domestic premises

---

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2011

## 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.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

## **Description of the setting**

Monkey Puzzle Day Nursery in St Albans was registered in 2010. It is independently owned and managed by the proprietor, although the nursery forms part of a larger Monkey Puzzle Day Nurseries Limited group but operates under a licence to trade as Monkey Puzzle.

The nursery operates from a converted railway station house which is a grade two listed building. This means there are no visitor toilets facilities; there are stairs to access the upstairs areas. Children are cared for in six base rooms. The rooms on the ground floor have direct access to the outside play areas. Babies are accommodated in three rooms on the first floor where kitchen facilities are also provided. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

Monkey Puzzle offers full day care for 51 weeks a year. They are open from 7.30am to 6.30pm providing a variety of sessions including part-time places. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 46 children may attend at any one time, with no more than 24 being under the age of two years. There are currently 72 children on roll. Currently between 25 and 28 children attend each day.

The nursery is managed by the proprietor, who is supported by a team of 11 staff. Half of which hold a Level 3 qualification. Other staff are Level 2 or working towards an early years qualification. Further staff will be employed as the setting becomes more established and is running to full capacity in the future. The setting receives support from the Hertfordshire Early Years development team and from the Monkey Puzzle head office management team.

## **The overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The well qualified staff have a good understanding of the children's individual needs. As a result, they are very effective in promoting the children's welfare, learning and development. Excellent resources, staff deployment and use of the building fully supports the children's play and care routines. Effective observations and planning ensure the children's achievements and next steps are identified, although systems in place are yet to be utilised. All children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Excellent partnerships with parents and other support agencies enhances the children's care and learning. The process for reflecting on current practice and ensuring continuous improvements is very effective.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

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

- establish a more effective system to identify children's starting points and use this to promote the children's individual learning skills.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

There is a comprehensive awareness of safeguarding amongst all the staff as they receive regular training. Thorough policies and procedures are implemented consistently and robustly to ensure children's safety and well-being. Very thorough vetting, recruitment and regular staff appraisals continually assess their ongoing suitability and identify training needs. Parents are fully informed of the high importance of safeguarding issues. An additional notice board has detail of the extensive safeguarding policies. A handout for parents and visitors outlines the referral process, identifies designated staff, gives detail of the Monkey Puzzle head office and the Ofsted contact details. Any concerns are prioritised and dealt with immediately and effectively.

Comprehensive risk assessments for all areas of the setting and outings ensure any potential risks to children are minimised. Robust procedures for arrivals and departures ensure the children and site are secure. A close circuit system covers the outside and entrance areas to monitor the car park and visitors coming to the nursery. Children learn about a healthy lifestyle through the daily routines. The nursery cook provides home cooked meals on site. She is fully aware of any special dietary requirements. Children make their own place mats. Information about their diets is included on them to ensure staff are fully aware of any limitations at each meal and snack time. When they are not sure, they check with the cook and lists in the office. Children's dietary needs are well met. A sample menu is available to parents in reception and on the website.

The accommodation is well suited to its purpose and is set up to provide a home from home environment. Children clearly thrive as a result of the layout of the setting. Free flow between the home rooms and the two outside areas is extremely well managed. Resources throughout the setting are of a very high standard. The use of interesting fabrics, flooring and play mats along with the cosy lay out of the room provides all children with a very comfortable environment in which to play and learn. The older children can access the cloakrooms and handwashing area independently. They clearly feel safe and are encouraged to be independent in all aspects of the daily routines. The recently renovated outside play for the older children has high quality impact absorbent surface and artificial grass so children can play out in all weathers. The babies have a small grassed garden for play. This area is also used for growing and gardening projects.

The registered provider who works as manager is very proactive in ensuring continuous improvements to the setting. She works closely with the staff team to ensure they continually reflect on their practice and the service provided. Staff are encouraged to extend and develop their early years skills and knowledge through additional training. The views of both parents and staff are highly valued. They are included in the setting's self-evaluation process. Children's home languages are

recognised and strong links have developed with families. The Early Years Foundation Stage is implemented effectively. There is a good balance between adult-and child-initiated activities and play opportunities. There is a very effective partnership with parents and external agencies which supports all aspects of the children's care and learning. The setting provides an inclusive environment where all children and their families are valued. The robust self-evaluation process identifies areas that need to be developed and builds on good practice. This enables the provision to promote continuous improvements and improve outcomes for all children.

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

Children flourish in this vibrant and welcoming environment because the manager and staff team have a very good understanding of how children learn. Staff calmly and effectively support children in making good progress towards the Early Years Foundation Stage and in developing skills that will help them in the future. Consistent interaction from key workers means that activities are well organised and age appropriate. Babies and young children's individual needs are shared with parents through a comprehensive daily diary. The observations and assessments in the children's 'Discovery Books' enable staff to plan effectively for the next steps in the children's learning. However, some systems that are in place are not yet being utilised to identify children's starting points and previous experiences.

Children's interests are the basis for developing their play and learning. Staff are skilled at extending their play. They introduce new resources and encourage children to join in. Children's self-esteem is supported by sensitive staff who are good role models. Children show an excellent understanding of what standards of behaviour is expected of them. Children are extremely confident and competent in communicating their thoughts and needs to staff. The children move confidently between the play areas, eagerly choosing from high quality resources and making excellent use of the environment. The layout of the setting provides each age group with a comfortable playroom and areas for more creative and messy play. The high quality adult interaction and exemplary organisation of routines, resources and staff deployment help babies and young children to gain an exceptionally strong sense of security

The outside areas are used frequently throughout the day. Free flow use of these areas is fully promoted in fine weather. The impact absorbent surface and artificial grass laid around trees and pathways provides an exciting and interesting play area. Children are provided with all weather waterproof suits. They can play freely in damp and wet weather. Children are keen to play football with the staff. With their suits on they can run and play freely, not worrying about muddy clothes and getting dirty. They are very active. They climb the tree with secure hand and foot grips and move confidently around the garden. Young babies are taken out each day for walks. The setting is sited on the Alban Way, a disused rail way that is a designated walk with parks and a nature reserve. They visit the bird hides and look for wildlife. These areas are used by the setting on a regular basis to extend the children's interests in nature.

Creative and imaginative play is well supported. Children enjoy the music group that comes into the setting each week. They sing, dance and play musical instruments with great delight. Children learn about other languages as the setting has introduced a Spanish class into the week's routines. This is well supported with books and linked topics. The activities provided throughout the nursery are recorded with photographs both in the children's records and around the nursery. Children share in this activity as they use a digital camera. They are becoming familiar with complex technology. Problem solving, counting and shape recognition is an integral part of the children's daily experiences. Children are asked to estimate and count the children and places at snack times. As part of the focused activities, children have fun matching shapes, sounds and letters. Resources, stories and craft activities are linked to extend and support their early learning skills to a good standard.

All children are encouraged to use their initiative and develop negotiation and cooperation skills in playing and interaction with their peers. Children of all ages receive an enjoyable and challenging experience across all areas of learning.

## 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

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b> | 2 |
| The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement                                     | 2 |

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>            | 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  | 1 |
| 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                                | 1 |

### The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

|  |   |
|--|---|
| The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
|--|---|

### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b> | 2 |
| The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning    | 2 |
| The extent to which children feel safe                           | 1 |
| 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 |

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



## **Annex B: the Childcare Register**

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:

Met