

Elm Grove Pepperpot Baby Unit

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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Type of setting

Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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

Elm Grove Pepperpot Baby Unit is one of two settings privately owned by the same provider. It was established in 1998 and is housed in a former school building in the Elm Grove area of Brighton. The building is single storey consisting of a playroom, a cot room, office space and toilet facilities. There is also an enclosed area for outdoor play.

The baby unit is open from 8am to 5.45pm Monday to Friday for 51 weeks of the year. It is registered on the Early Years Register and both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register and may care for a maximum of 14 children under eight years although, as it operates as a baby unit, children generally leave at the age of two years. Parents and carers can apply for a place at the sister nursery that cares for children up to five years. There are currently 18 children on roll attending a mix of full and part time hours.

There are six members of staff employed to work with the children including the manager, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The provision does not get funding for the provision of free early education.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children have a lot of fun and make good progress in the safe, inclusive environment. Strong leadership, effective team working and a good capacity for continual improvement results in practices which are organised specifically to meet the needs of the children and their families. All required written records and documents are maintained although there are minor inconsistencies in their quality. Whilst children's individual needs are well recognised and respected, systems for monitoring and assessing their progress have yet to be extended to help to identify any gaps in achievement. Parents and carers are warmly welcomed into the baby unit but arrangements to share information about their child's progress are not always fully effective. Good partnership working with other professionals, including early years providers, helps staff to meet children's needs and provide coordinated and consistent care.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review the systems in place to monitor children's progress and indicate the next steps identified in their learning and development to enable staff to reflect on these and more easily identify any gaps in achievement
- improve the quality of the information provided for parents and carers

- regarding their child's progress and offer greater encouragement and opportunities for them to share observations from home
- improve the maintenance of some written records to reduce the number of minor errors.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's safety is given high priority within the baby unit. Robust recruitment procedures ensure that children are cared for by suitably qualified and checked staff. Visitors can only enter the building when let in by staff and are fully supervised. Risk assessments are undertaken to identify any potential hazards and appropriate action taken to address these. As a result, children are able to explore their environment safely whilst developing a good degree of independence.

The manager based at the baby unit is responsible for its day to day running and works closely with the senior management team to devise, monitor and review all working practices and procedures. The strengths and weaknesses of the provision are effectively identified through regular discussions and ongoing reflection. As a result areas for improvement are identified and prioritised, for example revisions are currently being made to the systems for appraising staff and promoting staff development.

Staff use observations of the children to plan activities which they enjoy and which are specifically aimed at providing a level of challenge which is appropriate to meet their individual needs. As a result, children make good progress in their learning and development. However, their written assessment records tend to lack specific detail about the rate at which they are progressing and are not always fully up to date. Whilst this does not have any significant impact on the experiences of the children, it does not help staff to easily reflect on their records in order to identify gaps in the achievements of individual children or within the group as a whole.

All records and documentation required for the safe running of the provision are maintained but there are several entries which have minor omissions such as missing surnames. Overall, the quality of written records does not fully reflect the otherwise effective arrangements in place to support children. The focus within the unit is very clearly on interaction with the children and tasks which directly impact on their care such as preparing snacks and meals.

Space is effectively organised to allow children to crawl or walk safely on soft carpet, to climb onto soft cushions and also to take part in messy play in an area with linoleum flooring. They play with a good range of toys and resources which are well maintained and appropriate for their ages and stages of development. These include many items made of natural resources as well as plastic and electronic toys. There are also toys and images available which represent different people from throughout the community and wider world.

The manager takes lead responsibility for coordinating the care of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. She is booked to attend training to

support her in this role and is able to call on the special needs coordinator from the neighbouring sister-nursery until this has been completed. A range of strategies are in place to support children including the use of sign language to aid communication.

The baby unit employs a range of strategies to engage parents and carers. In addition to a range of written information and the very friendly greeting they receive as they arrive to deliver or collect their child, they are also invited to a variety of social events and meetings. They are well informed about the day to day life of the provision. They are also given regular updates on their child's progress although the summary reports produced for them lack specific detail. As a result, staff have found that they are not routinely providing enough information for some families and have identified this as an area of improvement.

The unit maintains effective working relationships with local authority early years advisors and a range of agencies to improve the provision and meet the needs of individual children. The benefits of working in partnership with other childcare providers are also well recognised.

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

Children thoroughly enjoy their time in the baby unit and make good progress as a result of the high quality of adult interaction. They get plenty of cuddles and supportive contact and are also encouraged to independently explore and investigate the resources on offer. They are developing good levels of independence whilst also showing a strong sense of security with their trusted carers. They are very well settled, play happily along side their peers and are beginning to interact, supported by staff to learn to share and take turns.

Children make good use of the space and support offered to develop their crawling, toddling and walking skills. They show great pride in their achievements and respond very well to the positive reinforcement they receive from staff. This also applies to their language development and problem solving skills. Staff very effectively use body language and good eye contact along with spoken language to communicate with the children and to help them to develop their speech. Children also enjoy experimenting with construction materials and a broad range of cause-and-effect toys, finding out what happens if they press different buttons.

Most of the day is organised around children's needs and they are free to explore the environment and choose what they want to play. However, staff also plan a range of activities offering new and interesting experiences including art and craft and messy play exploring different textures and materials.

The relaxed, friendly atmosphere supports children to develop good social skills. They are generally very happy with a great deal of smiles and laughter during the day. Those who are upset, for example when tired or just waking, are quickly and easily reassured. The opportunities children have to make choices, along with the encouragement they receive to develop good self-esteem, help to prepare them

for their transitions into their next pre-school setting.

Very good hygiene arrangements are in place to promote children's health. A clear commitment to healthy eating is shared with parents and carers. The lunches sent in from home are supplemented with nutritious snacks and drinks are constantly available. Nappy changing procedures are entirely appropriate and children are beginning to develop self-care skills and many gather, without prompting, by the door to wash their hands before meals.

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	3

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	2
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

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