

Merry Poppets Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

EY407134

Inspection date

19/07/2010

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.

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

Merry Poppets Nursery registered in February 2010. The provision operates from a building within Chicksands military base in Shefford, Bedfordshire. Access to the building is level with low level ramps to the outdoor play area. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

The provision is open each weekday throughout the year and sessions are from 7am to 6pm. A maximum of 56 children may attend the provision at any one time. The setting receives funding for nursery education. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The setting is also registered to offer care to children aged over five years. Children occupying these places would share the same facilities as the children in the early years age range. There are currently no children on roll in this age range.

There are currently 20 children on roll, all of whom are within the Early Years Foundation Stage. No children attend other settings such as the early years unit of the local primary school or childminders. The setting is able to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and children for whom English is an additional language. There are eight staff members which includes senior management and the secretary. Of these, six hold relevant childcare qualifications and one staff member is currently training at present.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Planning for the Early Years Foundation Stage is fully-focussed and child-led, supported by extensive planning covering all areas of learning ensuring that children receive imaginative experiences that foster rapid progress in their learning and development. Staff create a highly welcoming environment, using significantly effective safeguarding procedures and thorough risk assessments, ensuring they have cohesive knowledge of each child's needs to ensure that every child is fully included. Partnerships with other agencies, together with those formed with parents and carers, are key strengths, showing dedication to meeting all children's needs. The owners and senior management communicate ambition and drive to secure purposeful continued improvement using systematic self-evaluation.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- extending further the opportunities for children to explore, and identify with, the local and wider community and its services.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Comprehensive and detailed safeguarding procedures ensure that children are fully protected. Senior management ensure that all persons required undertake the appropriate checks to safeguard children. Daily routines within the premises, and staff vigilance when implementing the procedures, ensures that safeguarding procedures work at all times. This includes the close monitoring of any visitors within the premises as well as the overall security. Senior management implement in-depth recruitment and inductions for staff, including allocating a 'buddy' from existing staff as well as weekly reviews, to ensure that the staff group remains fully effective during changes. Risk assessments for the premises and any outings undertaken are systematic and are monitored and scrutinised to ensure their efficiency. Additional checks include the mealtime checklist completed by senior staff to review procedures regarding hygiene and safety for the children. All policies and procedures are thorough and reviewed regularly, each primary policy, such as safeguarding and behaviour management, has both a named responsible person and a second named person. Senior management are highly enthusiastic and have clear expectations for development. There is a real commitment to ongoing professional development throughout the staff group with a high level of training resulting in a clearly positive impact on the care and learning provided. Self-evaluation processes are very well developed and detail action areas to secure improved outcomes for children.

Children's individual learning styles are fully respected. The provision works between two rooms with children generally moving to the older room at two years old, however, the staff work closely with the parents to obtain their views as well as taking time to introduce children through short visits, helping them to begin sitting at low tables for lunch and increasing their independence. This ensures that appropriate care can be given in whichever room is suitable for every child. Staff are extremely well deployed throughout the day with children having free movement between the two outdoor areas and making clear choices in their play. The environment is highly conducive to learning, safe and well cared for, with an excellent range of quality play provision used to achieve the planned goals. The provision benefits from the ability to share provision with the two other settings owned offering an extensive range. Consequently, outcomes for children are excellent due to the commitment of staff, close attention to children's interests and the use of resources.

The highly inclusive systems of communication used to engage parents and carers ensure that there are consistent and productive partnerships. Methods include home visits prior to joining the provision at which point parents share their child's learning and development to inform the planned learning from the very beginning. Comments books, suggestion boxes and questionnaires, consultations evenings and written reports continue the sharing of information. Weekend books are used very successfully to enable parents to share events and news which is later discussed with children and continued where appropriate. Partnerships with other agencies are very well developed. The provision attends transition meetings with the early years unit of the local school, uses feedback books where children have

carers in their own homes, and follows guidelines where given, for example, by speech therapists or other medical services. They are showing a committed and forward-thinking attitude towards the overall care for every child and making links to work cohesively. The managers and staff actively promote equality and diversity and tackle unfair discrimination. They make the most of events and festivals to broaden children's awareness of each other's home culture. For instance, staff welcome items brought from home to discuss and seek key words in children's primary language or that used by their parents. Staff help children to learn about unfamiliar foods through project works and discussion. This helps children to begin appreciating the cultures of local and wider society.

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

Children are offered well-planned activities that help them to make rapid progress in their learning and development. Assessment through recorded observation is clear and the information gained is used proactively to identify next steps and goals in an individual plan. Progression is fully detailed and closely monitored. Older children play a full and active part in the planning for the provision. They choose and plan, with minimal input from staff, the full range of play activities to be set up from one week to the next. Staff members then set up what the children have chosen offering supplementary materials for them to explore. For example, having chosen water play with animals, the children further explore the tissue paper, placed alongside by staff, by floating it in the water. They talk to each other intently as they squeeze it into balls to show staff, use terms such as slimy to describe how it feels, and decide they have made a swamp adding insects from an adjacent activity. Staff are skilled in capitalising on children's emerging interests leading them into comparing sizes of the creatures they are using, helping them to consider why the paper has changed from hard to slimy, and exploring why the water has changed colour. Children are showing the curiosity needed to begin exploring early science.

Children show an avid interest in books and stories enjoying sharing these with each other and staff. They identify their own and each other's names on paintings and join in with endings of rhymes. All children have ample opportunities to begin mark making in a variety of forms. Younger children are seen to use chalks making swirls and dots to begin making faces and they are delighted, when using paint brushes and water outdoors, to draw on the surfaces learning control as staff help them to 'write' their names. An excellent range of treasure baskets and heuristic play helps younger children to begin exploring textures and materials, they develop concentration skills and dexterity as they manipulate materials. They are able to direct their own play because all materials are fully accessible and routines adapt around their own interests. For example, when preparing for snack time they become distracted by the shredded paper in a trough and delightedly, as a group, explore this throwing it into the air, sprinkling it and pretending it is snow. Staff skilfully support this exploratory play using it to introduce language and physical development.

All children are physically active and have free access to the indoor and outdoor

areas. Some outings are undertaken within the grounds of the Chicksands base. Some works, to explore local events are undertaken, such as discussing the passing-out parades and the links made with the other facilities set within these grounds. However, children are not fully benefitting from a large range of opportunities to really explore and identify with, the local and wider community and its services. They enjoy nutritious and healthy meals together from a menu shared with parents using fruit and vegetables grown locally and meat from a local butcher. Road safety is introduced using zebra crossing and road signs together with wheeled vehicles outdoors. All children take part in emergency evacuation helping them to develop safety awareness, while sun safety is a constant discussion point with children seeking sun hats to wear as they go outdoors. Children learn about safety when using materials due to gentle reminders from staff. For instance, an activity to make a discovery tray which involved children cutting sprigs of lavender and rosemary helps children to learn about the safe use of scissors. They intently gather the herbs into individual pots later going on to gather soil and stones and using excellent conversation and language skills to describe what they are doing, seeing, feeling and smelling. Children engage in daily conversations where they discuss the 'thinking tree'. This is used to focus on the provision's values and behaviours such as politeness, smiling and sharing with others. They also focus on environmental issues such as turning the taps off, using the paper bin and placing scraps of food into the fruit/waste bin. Certificate awards are used to praise children's behaviours at lunchtime. Children are very clearly developing excellent social awareness through a range of methods and fully exploring environmental issues learning about sustainability. This high quality care environment fully fosters rapid development across all areas of learning and development.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
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

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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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