

Merry Poppets Nursery Ltd

Flitwick Road, Westoning, BEDFORD, MK45 5AA

Inspection date	31/10/2013
Previous inspection date	01/03/2012

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	3
	Previous inspection:	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		3
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		3
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		3

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is satisfactory

- There is strong practice in the pre-school room where staff encourage children to make choices and become independent in their learning; this prepares them well for school.
- Children feel secure in the inclusive environment of the nursery because staff ensure they receive individual support to make steady progress in their learning and development.
- Staff explain to children about expectations for behaviour, which gives them an awareness about how to behave well.
- Staff have a secure awareness of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children.

It is not yet good because

- At times, staff are preoccupied with tidying away and setting up activities which impacts upon their quality interactions with children in the baby room.
- During some periods of the day, activities for children in the baby room lack challenge to ensure their continued stimulation and interest.
- Staff sometimes clear away activities before children have opportunity to explore these to a conclusion, disrupting the flow of their learning.
- During snack time staff in the toddler room give children little choice and children need to wait for staff to perform tasks, such as wiping hands and faces.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed children's learning activities in all rooms.
- The inspector had discussions with parents, staff and children.
- The inspector undertook joint observations with both managers.
- The inspector sampled a range of documentation including children's records, safeguarding procedures and self-evaluation.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager/owners of the nursery.

Inspector

Hayley Marshall

Full Report

Information about the setting

Merry Poppets Nursery Ltd is one of four local nurseries owned by a private partnership and was registered in 2011. It operates from converted residential premises which was previously a school, on the edge of the village of Westoning, Bedfordshire. There is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The nursery opens Monday to Friday, all year round from 7am until 6pm. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. There are currently 71 children attending who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-olds. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The nursery employs 13 members of childcare staff including the joint owners, supported by a cook and an administrator. The managers and six other staff hold a level 3 qualification. One member of staff has Qualified Teacher Status and a further member of staff has a Foundation Degree in Early Years.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- ensure that staff deployment consistently meets the needs of children in the baby room by ensuring: the time spent tidying away after meals and care routines do not impact upon the quality of interaction between staff and children; staff support children's enjoyment of rich, varied and challenging activities at all times of the day.

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- encourage children's freedom to explore messy and craft activities freely, drawing their own conclusion when they feel they are ready
- promote high expectations amongst staff for what children young can do by; organising snack time to ensure that children have choice over what and how much they eat, ensuring that they do not spend periods of time waiting for things to happen.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Staff at the nursery generally guide children's learning through a range of activities. Staff plan themes around things which interest children, such as Halloween. Children play with cooked and dyed spaghetti and paint a large pumpkin using an assortment of brushes. This stimulates their interest and promotes their physical skills, as they cover each part of the pumpkin. Children explore the paint with their hands and enjoy the sensation of the paint on their skin. However, children are not always given the time to allow their interests to fully develop or follow through what they are doing to its natural conclusion because staff stop the activity and tidy away, taking the brushes from children. This stifles children's natural curiosity and curtails their ability to fully follow and explore their own ideas.

Children enjoy playing in the garden where they have the opportunity to climb, dig and crawl. This helps to promote their larger muscles as they develop coordination and balance. At mealtimes children eat using forks and knives, increasing their hand and eye coordination. Babies pull themselves up on furniture and hold staff's hands to practise walking. However, the youngest children's learning is not always fully maximised because staff in the baby room sometimes, spend too much time tidying away after meal times and preparing activities. This disrupts the quality of staff interactions and reduces the level of support the youngest children receive. For example, after lunch, babies gather on a mat waiting for staff to change nappies and sweep the floor. During this period, activities do not encourage children's desire for mobility as there are few opportunities for them to engage in challenging activities to extend their learning and development.

Staff talk about colour and shape during activities promoting children's interest in early mathematics. Children sing number songs as they become aware of the order of numbers. In the ICT suite, children develop their skills in using technology as they manipulate the computer mouse and learn about computer programmes.

Pre-school children engage in a range of activities where they follow their ideas and choose what they want to play with. Staff talk with them, extending their understanding through open-ended questions. This encourages children to have a desire for learning and interest in finding out more. This prepares them suitably well for their move into school when the time comes. In younger rooms, staff sing to children and read them stories so they hear language throughout the day. Children reply in babbles and squeals, which staff respond to, valuing their early attempt at talking.

Staff work with parents to find out about children's starting points. They conduct home visits to meet children in their familiar environment and enable parents to share their knowledge of children's abilities. This helps them to gather information about children's prior learning and build upon what they know already. Staff encourage parents to record their observations from home on paper leaves and apples, which are then displayed outside each care room. Staff keep parents up-to-date about children's progress in the nursery through completing a weekly learning journal for parents to read. These, along

with everyday discussions, help to provide children with continuity in their learning as they move between home and the nursery. Staff track children's suitable progress through regular observations and assessments.

Staff work closely with other agencies when they identify that children need extra support. Individual plans identify small targets designed to help each child move forward and staff monitor these to ensure they know the progress children make. Staff in the pre-school room are skilful in ensuring that they include all children in activities. Consequently, children feel secure and settled and make steady progress given their individual starting points.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Children are calm and settle quickly at the nursery. Staff know their individual key children well because they form close relationships with them. Parents know who their children's key person is and discuss children's home routines and how well they have slept, for example. Staff observe parents' wishes in relation to how long children sleep for ensuring they have adequate rest periods throughout the day. Staff and parents work together to help children to achieve important development milestones, such as toilet training.

Staff understand the importance of working closely with others who provide care for children and have plans in place for sharing information should the need arise. The nursery has close links with the local school, taking children to visit in the term before they leave the nursery. Children sometimes attend the nursery and school as they make the move into formal education. Staff discuss children's learning with teachers to ensure the nursery suitably complements their experience at school. When children move rooms, staff complete transition forms and children attend the room for visits. This helps them to become familiar with those who will care for them and allows staff to become familiar with the children they will care for.

Children enjoy snack and meal times as part of their social learning. Staff talk with older children and encourage them to try new foods and talk about what food is healthy. Children eat cake on special occasions as they learn some foods are a treat. However, sometimes meal times are overly managed by adults. Children do not always make choices about what and how much they eat because staff make this decision for them. For example, staff serve children peeled banana in a bowl which does not allow children to learn for themselves how to make healthy food choices and the importance of portion control. Some children spend periods of time waiting for staff to serve them and waiting for staff to wipe their hands and faces afterwards. This means that children are not fully able to become independent in making choices and meeting their own needs. In the pre-school room children carry their plates back to the kitchen and get their own knives and forks. Taking on these small tasks gives them a sense of responsibility and achievement.

Staff teach children about expectations for behaviour as they remind them about what is and isn't acceptable. Children have clear boundaries which promote their good behaviour

and increase their ability to get along with each other. Children begin to learn about safety as staff encourage them to sit on chairs properly and to walk, not run, while inside.

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

Staff are aware of their responsibilities to keep children safe at the nursery. They know and understand the procedures in place, because managers test their knowledge through regular questionnaires during staff meetings. Senior staff attend regular training to maintain their awareness of good practice, in relation to safeguarding children. There are lines of communication for staff to report any concerns, and posters display important contact numbers for staff and parents. There are thorough procedures in place for safe recruitment and senior staff operate a check list for inducting staff. This ensures that the nursery complete all necessary checks to confirm the suitability of new staff. The nursery maintains safe, legal staff to children ratios at all times to supervise children as they play and learn. The nursery managers conduct audits of any accidents which occur at the nursery to identify any patterns, while regular risk assessments eliminate any likely risks to children.

The managers of the nursery supervise the work of staff and monitor their development through peer observations and appraisals. This helps to develop suitable staff training plans which benefit children. Staff cascade their learning to the staff team who adopt new approaches and ways of working to increase children's enjoyment. Staff and parents contribute towards self-evaluation. The nursery managers find out about the views of parents through questionnaires and implement their ideas when possible. Children have involvement in sharing their ideas as staff evaluate their enjoyment of activities. The nursery develops action plans to target weaker areas with reasonable effect. Recommendations from the previous inspection have been satisfactorily addressed, demonstrating that the nursery has a willingness to bring about improvements in quality care and education for children.

The nursery staff carry out frequent observations of children and use these to inform plans for children's next steps in learning. Tracking of children's progress helps staff to identify if their development does not meet expectations and staff take measures to access further support. The nursery completes the progress check at age two for children in consultation with parents. This ensures that the information it contains reflects children's abilities.

The nursery maintains a safe and legal staff to children ratio, at all times. However, staff deployment does not always meet children's needs in the baby room. This impacts upon the quality of interactions between staff and children. Furthermore, staff do not have consistently high expectations for what children can do and often complete tasks for them, leaving the children sat waiting for periods without challenge or stimulation.

The nursery staff understand the value of working in partnership with others to support the needs of the families who attend. They work with the local Children's centre to provide

information for parents and to share practice. Parents feel satisfied with the care that their children receive and find staff approachable and friendly.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY434658
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	874625
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	50
Number of children on roll	71
Name of provider	Merry Poppets Nursery Limited
Date of previous inspection	01/03/2012
Telephone number	01525 718241

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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