

Merry Poppets Nursery

15 The Avenue, Flitwick, BEDFORD, MK45 1BP

Inspection date

Previous inspection date

21/01/2014

Not Applicable

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

2

Previous inspection:

Not Applicable

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend	2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children	2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision	2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Teaching is good because staff have high expectations for children's achievements and daily plans are linked to their interests and observations to ensure that they make good progress.
- Children explore a broad range of tactile materials and everyday technology throughout the nursery. This helps them to experiment and discover how things work.
- Children develop good self-esteem and form strong attachments because the nursery offers flexible settling-in visits to families, and works closely with parents to plan next steps.
- Robust induction and performance management for staff, which includes safeguarding reviews, means that staff are knowledgeable and can support children.

It is not yet outstanding because

- On occasions some staff fail to maximise the opportunities for children to freely explore tactile materials and optimise learning.
- Children are on occasion not provided with sufficient time to solve problems, make decisions, and be independent because staff are sometimes over eager to support them as they play.
- Opportunities for children to learn outdoors are not always as good as those that they experience indoors to maximise learning.

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 activities in all rooms and the outside area, and spoke with the owners, staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector looked at a selection of policies, procedures and information provided by the provision.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the joint owners.
- The inspector reviewed a selection of children's observation and assessment development files with key persons.
- The inspector reviewed the self-evaluation evidence online.

Inspector
Lynne Talbot

Full report

Information about the setting

Merry Poppets Nursery was registered in 2013 and is on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. It operates from a detached converted dwelling in a residential area of Flitwick, Bedfordshire. The provision is one of several owned and managed by private owners and serves a wide community.

The provision is accessible to all children and there is one staircase inside to the first floor playroom and bathroom. There is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The provision employs 13 members of childcare staff. Of these, ten hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and 3; three staff members are working towards an early years qualification.

The provision opens Monday to Friday all year round with the exception of bank holidays. Sessions are from 8am to 6pm; an early start of 7am can be accommodated where needed. There are currently 85 children on roll. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The provision provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- encourage all children to freely explore media and materials, without taking over or directing, to enable them to test their own ideas
- consolidate children's problem solving skills and independence by allowing them more time and spontaneous opportunities to organise themselves, think through solutions and use their emergent skills and knowledge
- extend the daily plan to provide increased opportunities for all children to play and explore the natural environment outdoors to optimise learning and physical development.

Inspection judgements

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

Children are happy and motivated in the nursery and, consequently, make good progress in their learning and development given their starting points. Staff offer resources and experiences that support children to learn, and provide opportunities for them to practise their emergent skills and knowledge. This ensures that they are well-prepared for a move to school. For example, children are helped to talk aloud about their activities and

organise their thoughts, such as when they are painting they tell staff 'I am mixing the paints together and making brown' or 'I am drawing plums so I need purple paint'. They practise vocabulary and clearly explain what they are doing, for example, they describe tactile liquids and foams as, 'like water' or tell staff that, 'it makes your tummy get hurt if you eat it'. Consequently, children show developing skill with vocabulary. However, on occasion some staff are too eager to facilitate children's play by assisting them with tasks rather than encouraging them to make independent decisions and solve problems. An example of this is when staff fetch all items, including extra brushes, paper, and aprons for activities which they have prepared rather than placing resources within reach and allowing children to think the processes through themselves. All children explore early technology and older children regularly use the technology suite. The good teaching by staff means that they are vigilant when observing children and anticipate their interest. For example, when children watch a visitor with a laptop computer, staff quickly suggest that one is fetched from the technology suite and brought to the younger children's room. This is popular and prompts much discussion about 'mummy and daddy's' work with children exploring letters and sounds. Older children show skill as they operate simple programmes themselves and relay the sequence that the programme requires to reach a goal.

Observation and assessment, and the tracking of children's progress, are focused and build from an initial assessment that parents also contribute to through participation in the starting points document. Each child has a learning record in which observations are recorded and matched to show progression with next steps across all areas of learning. Face-to-face daily contact with parents plays a key part in secure communication. Consultation evenings and summary reports ensure that parents are fully involved with learning and development. In addition, the nursery invites parents to contribute to planning by using the 'all about me' forms that are sent home regularly, and the 'weekend' books. These initiatives further enhance the shared learning between the parents and the nursery. A progress check at age two is completed and shared with parents. This is monitored by the owners, and, as a result, progression for all children, given their starting points, is good. Children with English as an additional language receive well-planned support to ensure that they make good progress. Key words and resources, planned activities related to celebrations, and the involvement of parents help to introduce activities and information about religious celebrations and cultures to include and support children. Hence, all children make good progress given their starting points and individual needs.

All children work with materials that help them to make choices and use their senses. Malleable dough, foam mixed with glitter, shredded paper and chests of fabrics are all explored. The youngest babies rummage through the shredded paper and show amazement as they toss it in the air or sprinkle it onto the floor. Staff provide an array of such materials to encourage early exploration and discovery. However, there are occasions when some staff intervene in this play by making suggestions or leading the play to making objects and counting them. While there is value in offering running commentary and introducing new learning within play, this intervention sometimes inhibits children's own curiosity, exploration and discovery. Children show that they are eager to join in; they consistently demonstrate the characteristics of effective learning. For example, during an indoor physical activity session children show good concentration as they listen to the tape

and follow the songs and actions. Children spontaneously hold hands with those on either side of them making good relationships. Staff maximise such activities by introducing associated experiences such as pretending to be at the seaside and putting on hats and sun cream. They follow this by sharing story books linked to the songs that they have just enjoyed. Hence, children sustain good concentration. Staff are supportive and as a result the children confidently display their knowledge and initiate activities. This means that they are practising in preparation for new learning within any new setting, such as school.

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

The key persons are attentive and form good relationships with children. Initial settling-in sessions are offered to parents and during that time all aspects of children's well-being are discussed and recorded. Parents work with the key persons to develop a starting point for children's learning and development that helps them to track progress. Home visits are offered that enable the child to be viewed in the security of their own home, and this contributes significantly towards the partnerships with parents. As a result children form secure bonds and attachments which supports their feelings of being safe and secure. Children in the nursery move between rooms and share the same garden space, therefore they have regular contact with other children and staff. These methods help children to settle into the nursery, reinforce their stability, and prepare them for future moves.

Staff are enthusiastic, model good social behaviour for children and offer them frequent praise throughout the day. Children understand that they are all respected as individuals. They are asked their views and are given time to make choices. For example, children make choices between pieces of music to carry out tasks, such as tidying up in the three- to five-year-old room. They sing a 'Welcome to Merry Poppets' song enthusiastically, a song which was made up by staff with help from the children themselves, and this enhances their sense of belonging and pride in their nursery. A clear positive behaviour policy, shared with parents, demonstrates the views of the nursery. Children show good self-care skills and wash, and dry, their hands independently. They develop a very secure understanding of healthy eating. They are very well-nourished and their health is fostered. The cook delivers a varied menu, that is freshly cooked and which accommodates every child's specific need. Children enjoy social mealtimes and take increasing control for their good health. For instance, they are encouraged to self-select their tray and cutlery for their meal, and serve their meal themselves. This helps children to understand portion control, be aware that they have choices, and take charge of their nourishment. These steps help children to be independent and become emotionally prepared for a move to school or new setting.

Children learn to take risks within a safe environment and are physically active. For example, younger babies experiment with very large balls. They roll them across the room and are helped to roll over the top of them. Children take part in indoor activities within which they learn about spatial awareness and the need to take care of themselves, and others, when they jump and hop around. Older children move between the first floor and the garden during the day, carefully using the stairs and learning to keep themselves safe. All children have periods of time in the garden where they use some resources and enjoy the fresh air. However, the nursery has only recently registered in this premises and

opportunities for children to learn outdoors are not as good as those that they experience indoors to maximise learning. Staff use project works to enhance children's awareness of safety, for example, by discussing road safety with them. Children's moves between rooms are well-planned. The staff use transfer forms to monitor children's trial sessions in new rooms. Any move is agreed between parents, key persons and the manager at a time most suitable to meet the children's individual needs. This ensures that children's security is promoted to the optimum level. Children are prepared well for any move to school. Their independence is emphasised and new teachers are invited to visit the children in the nursery. As a result of these steps, all children are well-prepared for school or a move to another room in the nursery.

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

The owners and leaders have high expectations for the quality of care that is offered to children and families. Regular reviews of all paperwork and procedures take place to ensure that all requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage are met. Arrangements to safeguard children within the nursery are robust. All staff have safeguarding training as part of their induction, followed through with updated training, and included as part of the staff meetings. There are clearly mapped procedures for monitoring any safeguarding concern within the nursery. All staff demonstrate an understanding of the role and responsibility, with regard to referral to the appropriate authorities, when necessary. As part of the safeguarding procedures there are thorough recruitment and suitability checks. These are then followed by a detailed induction and probationary period during which new staff meet with the owners each week for four weeks, and then monthly for three months. During that time a detailed checklist of training must be completed and they are closely monitored and reviewed. As a result, the nursery ensures that children are fully protected.

Continuous professional development for staff is assured because regular monitoring of practice takes place. Appraisals for staff take place twice each year and are informed by the monthly observations carried out in each room by the senior staff and owners. Every member of staff has a training plan and objectives are set and reviewed. The owners work alongside staff as good role models. They offer continuous feedback to staff which provides very clear guidance to embed their understanding of good practice. Clear reflective practice includes input from all members of the staff, parents and carers, and children. For example, questionnaires seek the views of parents and staff, to identify areas of strength and how the nursery may be improved. Staff meetings, training plans and an evaluation of activities all help to build knowledge of practice and highlight areas to develop. A written reflective document is held, in addition to the action plan, to drive improvement. The reviews, by the owners, of all children's learning and development files also informs the self-evaluation and identifies further areas for development. As a result of these clearly embedded procedures, the information helps to drive the continuous methods that maintain, and build on, the good levels of achievement.

The nursery introduces 'shared care' documents for any child attending another setting to support the consistency in care. Some children attend school as part of their day and the

nursery collects those children from those schools. Transition documents, a summary of development, ensures that children's achievements can be built on with future planning. The staff are instrumental in settling children at new schools because they facilitate visits from new teachers, and work with those schools to prepare children through a regular exchange of information. Although there are currently no children attending with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the nursery does work with children and families with additional needs. The nursery works closely with any other professionals involved with children to fully support individual needs. Children are secure and confident, and clearly enjoy their play and learning. Consequently, they embark on their learning career ready to seek out new experiences and learn.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are	Met
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The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are	Met
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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	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
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 monitored and inspected again within six 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	EY463599
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	931603
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	60
Number of children on roll	85
Name of provider	Merry Poppets Nursery Limited
Date of previous inspection	not applicable
Telephone number	01525 752521

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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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