

Merry Poppets Nursery

RAF HENLOW, Henlow, SG16 6DN

Inspection date

Previous inspection date

06/02/2014

Not Applicable

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

3

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	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 requires improvement

- Teaching is good because staff use detailed planning fully linked to their observations and children's interests making full use of the well-resourced environment for all ages. As a result, all children make good progress.
- Children thrive in their health and physical development because the nursery offers free-flow play indoors and outside where children explore a range of natural materials.
- The nursery works closely with other agencies and provides very good support and preparation for children moving to new settings. This helps to support every child to learn and develop well.

It is not yet good because

- Some staff do not consistently share the policy regarding the use of mobile telephones and cameras with parents in the setting and as a result, children's safety is not fully assured.
- Staff in the before and after school club are not consistently securing the building and therefore, unauthorised persons may be able to enter the premises and children may be able to leave the premises unsupervised.
- Children's understanding of safety is not promoted to the optimum as it does not form part of their daily play, discussions and routines.

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 areas.
- The inspector looked at a selection of policies, procedures and information provided by the provision.
- The inspector spoke with the managers, staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector reviewed a selection of children's observation and assessment development files.
- The inspector spoke with parents and those involved with the nursery and took their views into account.

Inspector
Lynne Talbot

Full report

Information about the setting

Merry Poppets Nursery was registered in 2013 on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. It operates from detached purpose built premises within the grounds of RAF Henlow, Bedfordshire. The provision for older children operates from a separate building. The provision is owned and managed by private owners and serves the resident community.

The provision is accessible to all children and there are enclosed areas available for outdoor play. The provision employs 18 members of childcare staff. Of these, 17 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2, level 3 and one at level 5.

The provision opens Monday to Friday, all year round with the exception of bank holidays. Sessions are from 8am to 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 74 children on roll, of whom, 65 are in the early years age range. The provision provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- implement the procedure for safeguarding children, with specific regard to the safe use of mobile telephones and cameras in all areas and ensure that all staff consistently make all visitors and parents to the premises aware of the policy
- ensure that the registered premises are secured at all times.

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

- support and enhance children's understanding of safety and personal responsibility by providing opportunities for them to consider their own safety during everyday activities and routines.

Inspection judgements

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

All children are happy and motivated in the nursery and consequently, make good progress in their learning and development given their starting points. They are motivated to learn and become highly engaged in their play because the staff provide time for them to plan the activities each day. For example, at the beginning of each session, the group

sit together and children make suggestions for what activities they would like to set out. This approach fully supports child-led learning. Staff extend those plans with supportive continuous provision to make sure that the indoor curriculum is balanced. Children of all ages explore tactile, art and imaginative materials. Younger babies, for example, are animated as they experiment with red and white paint, which is placed in a shallow floor tray with cars. They eagerly make marks and mix the colours together and become fascinated with the resulting colour and texture. Skilled staff observe how children use the materials before following their lead to offer more paper, brushes and copying children as they paint their hands to make prints. By talking about what is taking place, staff help children to link vocabulary to actions extending communication skills. Staff in all rooms show good teaching as they build on child-initiated learning. For instance, during outdoor play in the toddler room, children are excited when they find they can make footprints when walking through spilt water. Staff quickly provide additional materials, such as different sized paint brushes, with which children start to make marks using water on the paving. These younger children show their emergent knowledge as they identify and try to draw circles and triangles. They show that they recognise some letters when staff join them and begin to write the children's name alongside them. Children are fascinated when they sprinkle shredded paper in the air and it blows away. They become involved in conversation with staff which extends their vocabulary skills telling staff, for example, that it is, 'like snow' and adding, 'in winter when I see Santa!' Staff demonstrate good teaching when they build on the children's excitement and interest. Staff working with the older children provide many opportunities for them to extend their confidence with reading and the recognition of sounds and letters. For example, each day, they view and discuss simple sentences written below pictures, showing the group behaviour rules and are able to predict what they say. They eagerly take part in 'alphabet bingo' and are frequently seen to identify the letters of words that they see, such as the name written on visitors laptop computers or sounding the letters of each other's name. As a result of the opportunities to practise their emergent skills and knowledge, children are well prepared for school.

Observation and ongoing assessment and the tracking of children's progress, are focused and build from an initial assessment that parents also contribute to. Each child has a learning file in which observations are evaluated. Detailed weekly planning shows an individual needs planning sheet. This shows activities, which are directly linked to the observations made and the identified next steps for children. Focused adult-led activities are designed to build on the evaluation of previous children's interests and activities. In addition, very detailed evaluation of the week's activities takes place by staff to help continuous development and reflection of their practice. Face-to-face contact with parents plays a key part in the communication about children's learning and development. Observation shows that key persons complete a daily record sheet, which is used to provide feedback to parents regarding activities each day. In addition, parents complete slips showing achievements made at home and these feed into individual planning. For example, to build on a child's exploratory nature, staff built more opportunities for exploring new tactile materials into the sessions. This thorough planning identifies every child's current interest to optimise the progress made. A progress check at age two years is completed and shared with parents. This is monitored closely by the managers and as a result, progression for all children, given their starting points, is good. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully supported because staff develop

individual plans for them that foster learning in all areas. The provision of 'daily routine' boards help to include and support all children. Hence, all children make good progress given their starting points and individual needs.

All children enjoy stories shared with staff and independent reading. Staff incorporate actions, songs and props into the story times with children, which enhances their engagement. In addition, children love to share the diary of 'Barnaby Bear', who is the nursery toy, which is taken home each week by different children, eagerly recalling where Barnaby has been and predicting what adventures he may have next. In this way, the nursery enhances children's shared links to the nursery and each other. Children are imaginative and develop cooperative play in the role play areas. For example, they become deeply involved in developing a restaurant and discuss what items they need, how the game will develop and who will be part of it. Staff are seen to be supportive but do not intervene, which allows children to have time and freedom to become deeply involved and initiate their own learning. All staff use good questioning techniques and provide children with the time needed to consider a response. For example, when experimenting with blocks and ladders, children are given time to solve the problem of their tower breaking without the intervention of staff. They acknowledge children's questions but recognise that they need time to reach a decision and answer their own question. Children count freely, compare towers and ladders, talking about the tallest and shortest ones. They show that they are well motivated and eager to join in; they consistently demonstrate the characteristics of effective learning. Staff are supportive and as a result, 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. Each parent is provided with a letter, which explains the role of the key person to support the shared care for children. Parent boards, which display detailed planning, information on the Early Years Foundation Stage and invite information on children's achievements at home, all help the parent and nursery relationship. Parents' comment that, 'the nursery is extremely flexible and understands the demands of families working on a military base, for example with hours changed at short notice'. 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 from time-to-time and share adjoining 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.

The managers ensure that one of them is present each day to monitor the deployment of staff to ensure that it is managed in the best possible manner to meet the needs of all

children. 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. A clear positive behaviour policy, shared with parents, demonstrates the views of the nursery. Children enthusiastically care for their surroundings and they tidy their toys away at the end of the sessions, dancing as they do so to the 'tidy up' music. They love to receive stickers, which recognise their efforts and eagerly anticipate the review of the 'Awesome Attitude' board and the slips, which are completed each week for children showing, for example, acts of kindness, caring or helping towards others. This helps to enhance children's attitude towards care for others and resources. Children enjoy social lunchtimes where they sit together with their packed lunches provided from home. The nursery have introduced, since registration, a social breakfast and tea-time where children enjoy a hot snack menu, including, for example, spaghetti bolognese, crumpets or cheese on toast. Children sit together at tables and take some responsibility for clearing their plates away. All dietary needs, or preferences, are requested in writing from parents and these are closely accommodated. Children follow good self-care routines with older children, taking full responsibility for washing their hands and caring for their belongings. Posters, placed alongside boxes of tissues, showing clear hygiene routines and disposal of tissues, encourage children to become aware of personal hygiene. As a result of all these steps, children are independent and emotionally prepared for a move to school or new setting.

Children develop good physical health. Comprehensive risk assessments, inside the premises and in the garden areas means that children are generally safe. The deployment of staff and their vigilant supervision means that children may explore freely with risks minimised. Children enjoy free movement between indoors and outside at all times. They use the vegetable garden area to grow fruit and vegetables, a climbing area with safety matting and run and climb across static equipment and the natural hills on the grass areas. Indoor activities, such as musical statues and the 'wake and shake' routines, further help children to explore physical movement and take some safe risks. Children discuss safety issues, such as road safety and stranger danger and are reminded to act safely in the nursery when they review the rules, such as 'walking feet'. However, children have fewer opportunities to develop a practical knowledge of personal safety because they are not involved in assessing risks to themselves, indoors and outside. As a result, children are not actively aware of safety. Children's moves between rooms are well planned to ensure that they are settled and ready for the move. Staff use clear records 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 very well for any move to school. Their independence is emphasised and activities focus on the forthcoming move. A teacher from the local lower school visits with increasing frequency to help those children moving to prepare for school. Children also visit the school to take part in events, such as Harvest Festival and this helps them to become familiar with the new surroundings. 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 management have high expectations for the quality of care that is offered to children and families. Although, only recently registered, the nursery has completed significant levels of work in this nursery to enhance the physical surroundings, improve the resources and initiate clear observation and assessment to support children's learning and development. Regular reviews of all paperwork and procedures are in place to ensure that all requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage are met. 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. There is a very clear policy regarding the use of mobile telephones and cameras in the nursery and posters are displayed to this effect. Staff are able to relate this policy to visitors to the setting. However, some staff have failed to fully implement the policy and this is a breach in requirements of both the Early Years Register and Childcare Register. 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 frequently with the owners. During that time, a detailed checklist of training must be completed and they are closely monitored and reviewed. Arrangements to safeguard children within the nursery are generally good, however, the failure by some staff to implement the safeguarding procedure, in full, impacts on the protection of children.

The nursery implements detailed risk assessments to support children's safety indoors and for all outings. There are clear records showing that permission is sought for all outings and to demonstrate the steps that are taken on such outings, to ensure children's safety. Accidents are managed well with all necessary records maintained; parental signatures show that they are informed of accidents and incidents. The main nursery building has robust security measures, including a main entrance door only accessible when staff operate the internal release button and circuit breaker alarms on each playroom door. The second building, where the before and after school club takes place, is enclosed by a high fence and gate with a sliding bolt and has a doorbell and lock. However, this security measure is not consistently applied by some staff in this building and as a result, unannounced persons may enter the building and it is possible for children to leave unsupervised. This is a breach in requirements of both the Early Years Register and Childcare Register.

Continuous professional development for staff is assured because regular monitoring of practice takes place. Although, only recently registered, the appraisals for staff that are planned to take place twice each year are underway. These are informed by the observations carried out in each room by the managers. Every member of staff has a training plan and objectives are set and reviewed. Significant training has taken place since the recent registration and the nursery has a very high level of staff qualified to level 3 with a lower number qualified to level 2. Weekly planning of staff resources is completed by the managers to ensure that all ratios, as required, are met and exceeded, to support children fully. The nursery benefits from supernumerary managers and deputy managers, thus, can work in place of staff during absence. 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 to drive improvement. The weekly reviews by the owners of all planning and 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 improvement.

The nursery staff work closely with any other carer for children. Objectives are shared and next steps agreed with information provided from other carers or settings incorporated into planning for learning. Transition documents, including a summary of development, ensures that children's achievements can be built on with future planning. 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. The nursery works closely with other professionals involved with children to identify and fully support individual needs. Parents are fully involved in the individual plans and help to review them in regular meetings. Parents report that they are very happy with the support provided to them by the key persons and the nursery. Children are secure and confident and clearly enjoy their play and learning. Consequently, they are ready to seek out new experiences and learn.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are

**Not Met
(with
actions)**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are

**Not Met
(with
actions)**

To meet the requirements of the Childcare Register the provider must:

- ensure that children are unable to leave the premises unsupervised (compulsory part of the Childcare Register)
- ensure that no person may enter the premises without the knowledge of a person who is caring for children on the premises (compulsory part of the Childcare Register).
- ensure that children are unable to leave the premises unsupervised (voluntary part of the Childcare Register)
- ensure that no person may enter the premises without the knowledge of a person who is caring for children on the premises (voluntary part of the Childcare Register).

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	EY468971
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	953205
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	90
Number of children on roll	74
Name of provider	Merry Poppets Nursery Limited
Date of previous inspection	not applicable
Telephone number	07792531198

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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.

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.

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