

# Ducklings Opportunity Group

Meir Community Centre, Pickford Place, Meir, Stoke on Trent, ST3 7DY

## Inspection date

09/04/2014

Previous inspection date

26/05/2010

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

**This inspection:**

4

Previous inspection:

2

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 4

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision 4

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

### This provision is inadequate

- The premises are not suitably secure at all times as children are able to leave without being in the care of an agreed individual. This places children at risk of harm.
- Staff are not clear about their roles and responsibilities during routine times, such as arrival and departure, which compromises children's safety.
- Systems to monitor staff performance and to ensure the smooth running of the setting are not embedded. Consequently, poor practice is not quickly identified and rectified to ensure children's safety and welfare.
- Children are not always given time to respond to questions from staff or to explore their own thinking during some adult-led activities. There is scope, therefore, to maximise their learning and enjoyment by allowing them more time to communicate their own thoughts and ideas.

### It has the following strengths

- Children enjoy a wide range of interesting and engaging activities and are making good progress towards the early learning goals. They are enthusiastic and willing to learn as staff are good teachers, providing children with appropriate challenge linked to their individual abilities.
- Strong attachments have been formed between the children and staff. Children are comfortable and relaxed as they receive genuine warmth and affection.

## **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 the playroom and the outside learning environment.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records and planning documentation.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of staff working with children, the provider's self-evaluation form and improvement plan.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day and from information included in the nursery's own parent survey.

## **Inspector**

Jennie Lenton

## Full report

### Information about the setting

Ducklings Opportunity Group registered in 2009 and is on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is run by a committee and operates from Meir Community Centre, Stoke-on-Trent. The group serves the immediate locality and the surrounding areas. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The setting is open from 9.30am until 2.30pm, Monday to Friday, during term time only. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 34 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age range. The nursery receives funding for the provision of free early education for two-, three- and four-year-olds. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are currently six staff working directly with the children. Of these, four hold early years qualifications at level 3 and above. This includes two members of staff with a degree. The group receives support from the local authority.

### What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- ensure that the premises are secure and that children can only leave when they are supervised by individuals who have been notified to the provider by the parent
- ensure that all staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and recognise the importance of prioritising children's safety above and beyond all other duties
- develop and embed robust systems for overseeing the smooth running of the setting, including regular focused supervision for staff, to swiftly identify any weaknesses in practice and promote continual improvement.

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

- increase opportunities for children to explore and share their thinking during adult-led activities.

## Inspection judgements

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

Children are happy and content in this friendly and welcoming group. They are keen to take part in activities, playing imaginatively in the home corner as they pretend to go

shopping or styling each other's hair at the hairdressers. They show they are confident as they chat away to their friends and take part in group activities, such as circle time. They sing songs with enthusiasm, shout out well-known lines in favourite stories and happily talk about their families as they share photograph books which contain pictures of the important people in their lives. All children enjoy a good range of activities that stimulate and engage them. Information technology skills are well developed, as children enjoy using the computer, playing educational games and developing their coordination with a keyboard and mouse. Their creativity flourishes as they decorate pictures of eggs as part of an Easter celebration, using bobbles, glitter and sequins to create unique and interesting designs. Outside, children enjoy a fantastic learning environment which fully promotes their desire to explore and investigate. They search for bugs using magnifying glasses and bug catchers, use the large tyres to create a bus and collect fallen wood to create dens. They develop their physical skills as they use the climbing apparatus, whizz about on scooters and enjoy running around in the fresh air.

Staff display very good teaching skills. They deliver a range of planned and spontaneous activities with enthusiasm that captures children's imagination and encourages them to be willing learners. New vocabulary is learned as staff introduce words, such as 'vibration' to describe how the bee they find is moving its wings. They encourage children to describe how the bee moves and follow up their interest in the spiders they find, by helping them draw spider pictures on the ground with chalks. They encourage children to count the legs on their drawings, effectively developing their understanding of number in a fun way. However, there are times when the enthusiasm of staff means that children do not have enough time to share their own ideas. For example, staff provide lots of information about the bugs and ask lots of questions without always giving children time to explore their own thinking. Consequently, there is room to improve some adult-led activities by allowing children more opportunities to communicate their views with less direction from staff. Staff also play alongside children on a more individual basis to help them learn specific skills. For example, they help them learn to write their names by showing them the individual letters and taking the time to describe how each letter is formed. Children show high levels of concentration and successfully print their names on the whiteboard as they are given plenty of time and encouragement to succeed. They beam with pride as they form the letters and shout 'I did it' as they complete their names. Through such activities, children develop key skills for future learning, such as concentration and perseverance.

All children are making steady progress towards the early learning goals. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well to make good progress in their development. Staff work closely with other agencies to ensure they plan and provide a range of suitable activities which meet their individual learning needs. Staff's support for all children's progress helps to prepare them well for their future learning and the move on to school. Children's achievements are recorded and the key person for each child regularly monitors their development to ensure that they are continually making progress. Staff identify ways to help children move forward and use this to inform the planning of future activities. Planned events are shared with parents, and staff consult with them at the start of a placement to determine children's starting points. They ensure that parents are kept informed of their child's progress through regular reviews. Parents also have the opportunity to contribute to staff's understanding of their child's achievements and their

comments are included in their child's records. Resources, such as library books, are regularly shared so that parents can continue their child's learning at home.

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

Children display positive relationships with the staff and each other. They are helped to settle in as the nursery offers four settling-in sessions where parents slowly build up the time they leave their children. Staff use these sessions to find out about each child's personality, likes and dislikes and to assess their individual levels of ability. Information is also collated on registration forms to ensure that staff are aware of any special requirements. Dietary or medical needs are fully discussed, and where special requirements are identified, staff work in partnership with other professionals and parents to provide high levels of support. For instance, they access funding to provide one-to-one care if needed and go with children to provide additional support at times of change, such as helping them to settle into school. This helps all children to make the best possible progress.

Children have some opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe. They know how to respond swiftly during a fire drill as these are regularly practised and discussed. They also know how to behave safely as they cross the car park and make their way up to the outside play area. They know it is important to walk properly and not to stop on the crossing. However, their understanding of safety is compromised as staff do not ensure that they are fully protected from leaving the premises unsupervised. Roles and responsibilities at arrival and departure times have not been fully grasped by staff, and the door of the setting is not always secure to ensure children only leave when their parent or guardian is present. This seriously compromises their safety. Children behave well. They know the rules of the group and understand that these are in place for their own well-being. For example, they know not to run indoors as they might slip. Children play together harmoniously and display good behaviour. They take part in 'tidy-up time', putting away toys with little prompting. They receive encouragement and praise from staff throughout the day, which effectively builds self-esteem and promotes emotional security. Any unwanted actions are dealt with calmly.

Children's good health is well promoted through sensible routines and a commitment to a healthy lifestyle. Active play is effectively encouraged both indoors and out, as children enjoy active sessions indoors with a weekly physical education session. They have daily access to the outside areas, where they enjoy the challenge of the climbing apparatus and other equipment, as well as taking part in a range of group games, such as parachute play. Children bring their own packed lunches and are provided with a range of healthy snacks, such as fresh fruit and toast. Drinks of water are available throughout the day.

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

This inspection was prioritised following concerns being raised about the provider's safe practice in relation to the safety of the premises, child supervision, staff deployment and effective risk assessments. The inspection found that the provider had failed to ensure

that children cannot leave the premises unsupervised and that staff were not clear about their roles in order to ensure children's safety was not compromised. Procedures for the arrival and collection of children were not robust and an incident occurred where a child was able to leave the premises without adult supervision. The setting has taken steps to ensure that this does not happen again and a new collection procedure is now in place to ensure that children only leave once they are in the care of an agreed individual. However, this procedure was not implemented prior to the incident. Furthermore, the arrival procedure has not been changed and there remains a risk of a similar incident occurring again as the handover of children occurs in the corridor, which is not secure. These significant weaknesses in practice are breaches in the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the requirements of the Childcare Register. The setting seeks to ensure that all staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children. References are taken up and a Disclosure and Barring Service check is obtained.

Most staff are well qualified and some of the team have been working in childcare for a number of years. There is a commitment to ongoing training and unqualified staff are encouraged to enrol on courses to build on their knowledge and understanding. All staff are required to complete key courses, such as first aid and safeguarding. Consequently, all staff recognise the signs and symptoms that may indicate abuse and are clear about how to follow any concerns up promptly. Their practice is underpinned by a full written policy, which also covers the use of mobile phones in the setting. Staff know not to use their mobile telephones while they are working and visitors to the setting are also reminded not to use their devices. This protects children's images from being used without parental permission. The manager and her team are keen to develop the setting and there is a positive attitude towards continual development. Self-evaluation is used to identify areas for development and all future plans are based on improving children's experiences. For example, the development of the excellent outdoor area has been a priority and children clearly benefit from having a secure outdoor area where they are able to enjoy regular active play. Staff undergo an induction and an appraisal system is in place to assess ongoing suitability. However, the systems for developing staff and monitoring practice are not suitably robust. Self-evaluation was not effective in identifying poor practice at arrival and departure times, and supervision sessions and appraisals have not been successful in ensuring all staff are aware of and fulfilling their roles in relation to ensuring child well-being. This also represents a breach in requirements. Despite recent events, which have had an impact on staff morale, there remains a positive atmosphere at the setting and all staff are open to new ideas and keen to develop their own practice.

Staff build positive relationships with parents and chat to them on a daily basis about their child's achievements and well-being. They get to know parents well and seek to support them. For instance, they find out about any significant events at home and support children well as they deal with changes to their family relationships. This approach enables staff to support families and children more effectively as they take account of issues that may impact on daily life. Notice boards in the corridors provide parents with additional information about childcare issues and about the Early Years Foundation Stage in particular. This helps parents to support and develop their children's learning at home. Key policies and procedures are shared with parents, ensuring that they are aware of the standards to which the setting operates and providing details of how to make a complaint if they need to. Parents' comments show that they are very happy with the care provided.

They rate the nursery positively and comment that their children 'adore coming'. The nursery also builds good links with other providers. Teachers at the local schools visit the children who will attend their provision and get to see them in the nursery. This enables them to see children in an environment that is familiar and comfortable to them and ensures that children know their new teacher prior to moving to school.

### 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 receiving childcare are kept safe from harm (compulsory part of the Childcare Register)
- ensure that a child is unable to leave the premises unsupervised (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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY404277
<b>Local authority</b>	Stoke on Trent
<b>Inspection number</b>	968319
<b>Type of provision</b>	
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 - 17
<b>Total number of places</b>	20
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	34
<b>Name of provider</b>	Ducklings Opportunity Group Committee
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	26/05/2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	07817 175 228

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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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