

Merchistoun Minnows

Merchistoun Hall, 106 Portsmouth Road, Horndean, Waterlooville, Hampshire, PO8 9LJ



Inspection date

14 July 2015

Previous inspection date

18 May 2010

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

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is good

- Effective leadership and management ensures the safe and smooth running of the provision, with all requirements met well. All those involved have a clear understanding of their responsibilities to protect children and know how to respond to child protection concerns.
- All staff and parents are fully involved in the self-evaluation process, which has helped to maintain the provision's good standards and means the recommendation made at the last inspection has been met.
- Staff support children's emotional well-being effectively, which helps prepare them well for the next stages in their learning, such as the move to school.
- Staff use the system for observation and assessment effectively to help them plan and provide tailored support for each child. As a result, all children make good progress given their starting points and develop the good skills they require for their future learning. Staff meet children's physical needs well.
- Staff work closely with parents, other early years providers and professionals involved in children's care and learning. This helps staff meet children's individual needs well, including those with additional needs.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- On occasions, staff do not always plan small group activities to capture children's interests fully or to help build their concentration and learning as well as possible.
- Staff do not always work with parents effectively to help guide them further about how they can promote their children's learning at home.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- keep a careful check on how well staff plan activities to make sure they capture children's interests thoroughly and that they promote children's concentration and learning, particularly during small-group activities
- extend children's learning by providing more individual guidance and information to parents and carers about ways of supporting their children's learning at home.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed staff and how they interact with children during activities, and viewed the play areas and resources.
- The inspector undertook joint observations with the manager and the deputy.
- The inspector sampled a range of documentation relating to children's development, staff suitability, training records, self-evaluation and safeguarding procedures.
- The inspector had discussions with the manager, staff and a representative of the management committee. She spoke with children and parents to gain their views of the provision.
- The inspector discussed the provision's self-evaluation and how management uses the action plan to bring about continuous improvement, including how the recommendation made at the last inspection has been met. She discussed how staff work with other early years providers, other professionals and parents.

Inspector

Jacqueline Munden

Inspection findings

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend. This is good

Staff provide a good range of adult-led activities that promote different areas of children's learning and their natural curiosity to explore. For example, pre-school children were keen to mix the paints, finding out how to create different colours. Staff encouraged children to paint the initial letters of their names, showing them a book with the alphabet to remind them what the letters look like. This helped develop children's coordination and their early writing skills. Staff interact purposefully with children, which increases children's understanding and helps them to become confident talkers. Staff make sure they are at the children's levels so children can see them as they speak. Staff model language by repeating words and asking children questions, which encourages them to reply. Staff use many opportunities throughout the day to promote children's mathematical skills, for example, by encouraging children to count and by talking about shapes.

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

Staff use their good knowledge of how to promote children's learning to help them set up the environment in interesting ways with a wide range of resources. This encourages children to explore and initiate their own play. For example, children used toy diggers to make a hole in the ground and added water from the water trough. Children feel safe and secure and develop good independence during daily routines, such as snack time. Staff talk to the children and ask what they need to do when walking up and down the stairs before going outdoors. This helps children to be responsible for their own safety and to follow rules. Children show high levels of cooperation and manage their feelings well due to the good explanation of staff and the effective strategies they promote. For example, the use of a sand timer at the trampoline helps children to know when it is either their friend's turn or their own, and it helps them to wait patiently, confident they will get a turn.

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

The manager monitors all of the children's progress to ensure the educational programme meets their needs, although her observations of some small-group activities lack rigour. The committee and manager use supervision effectively to help improve the professional development of staff. This has had a positive effect on children's well-being and learning. For example, staff have improved how they manage children's behaviour, which has a significant effect on children's self-esteem and helps them form friendships. Since the last inspection, children aged from two years can attend the provision. Management has employed staff with the experience and skills to meet the specific needs of these children.

Setting details

Unique reference number	110340
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	835853
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	2 - 5
Total number of places	32
Number of children on roll	55
Name of provider	Horndean Community Association Committee
Date of previous inspection	18 May 2010
Telephone number	023 92597114 Ext 26

Merchistoun Minnows registered in 1998. It comprises of a pre-school and Mini Minnows, which takes children aged two years. It operates from Merchistoun Hall, a community building in Horndean, Hampshire. The pre-school opens each weekday during school term time from 9am until 3pm, with an optional lunch club from 12 noon until 1pm. Mini Minnows opens on Monday, Wednesday and Friday during school term time from 9am until 12 noon. The setting receives funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years. There are 12 members of staff employed to work with the children, including the manager. One member of staff is a qualified teacher and all remaining staff hold, or are working towards, a relevant early years qualification.

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