

Merry Poppets Nursery

Disc, Mod Chicksands, Chicksands, SHEFFORD, Bedfordshire, SG17 5PR

Inspection date

29/04/2014

Previous inspection date

19/07/2010

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

2

Previous inspection:

1

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

- Children are happy at the nursery and make good progress in their learning through participating in well-planned activities.
- Practitioners have a secure knowledge and understanding of all areas of safeguarding procedures. Consequently, children learn in a safe and secure environment.
- Practitioners work in close partnership with parents to ensure children's individual care and learning needs are identified and met.
- Management effectively monitor children's progress to ensure that they all continue to make good progress in all areas of learning and development.

It is not yet outstanding because

- There is scope for some practitioners to increase their range of open-ended questioning techniques to give children more opportunities to predict outcomes before they investigate and experiment, to maximise their learning and development.
- There is not always an acute awareness by all practitioners of the children's level of engagement during child-initiated play. Consequently, some children are not always actively occupied to extend their learning opportunities to the fullest.

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 nursery and talked with the staff and children.
- The inspector viewed the areas of the premises and garden used by the children.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to during the inspection and as recorded in written reference letters.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records, planning documentation, evidence of suitability of staff and a range of other documentation, including the safeguarding procedures, menu plans, risk assessments and the nursery's self-evaluation form.

Inspector

Katrina Rodden

Full report

Information about the setting

Merry Poppets Nursery was registered in February 2010 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The provision operates from a building within Chicksands military base in Shefford, Bedfordshire. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The provision is open each week day throughout the year and sessions are from 8am to 6pm. The setting provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children. There are currently 46 children on roll, all of whom are within the early years age range. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are nine members of childcare staff; of these, one member of staff holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 5, three hold qualifications at level 3 and two hold qualifications at level 2.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- increase the use of open-ended questioning to allow further opportunities for children to predict outcomes in their investigations and experiments to optimise their learning
- review staff deployment strategies within group rooms and outdoor areas, specifically during child-initiated play, in order to enhance children's learning through meaningful play and activities to promote excellent progress in all areas of development.

Inspection judgements

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

The nursery is set in a light and welcoming building. Practitioners carefully utilise the space to provide a wide range of different areas in which children can freely move around, engaging them in activities that cover all areas of learning. Consequently, children are able to select activities that interest them and take them to the next stage in their learning. For example, children enjoy using their hands in a large tray of foam that contains glitter and has wooden animals hidden under the foam. Some children collect the animals, and sort them into colours, while others enjoy smoothing the foam and making marks and writing letters with their fingers. Although practitioners take time to clearly answer children's questions, opportunities allowing children to predict outcomes through additional questioning and giving children enough time to consider their responses are occasionally not maximised. Consequently, all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good but not rapid progress in their learning. Practitioners identify and utilise children's interests and ideas to extend learning. For example, children

who have a particular interest in trains are invited to sit in a book corner and share a story about trains with a practitioner. Together, they identify colours, count objects and talk about the story. While children play, practitioners accurately assess and record children's achievements and progress. The information is regularly reviewed to identify children's next steps for learning so that activities are re-shaped to offer challenge. This results in practitioners using good teaching strategies as they provide children with a range of activities which are planned around each child's developmental needs. A door leads off each group room to a designated outdoor area in which children continue to play and learn. For example, older children enjoy kicking a ball into a goal with different shapes and numbers for the ball to enter. Children name the shape and call the number as the ball falls into the net. Younger children enjoy sitting in a sand pit as they learn how to fill a bucket with sand to create a castle. Although children remain occupied for the vast majority of the time, there are occasionally short periods where some children become disengaged from meaningful play and activity. Practitioners do not always react to signs that children may need a little guidance to stimulate their learning during child-initiated play, but when they do, children quickly become constructively occupied again. Consequently, there are times when children's learning is not fully extended to support them to make excellent and rapid progress.

Children are encouraged to join in with structured activities to help prepare them for school. They enjoy identifying numerals that are strung to the garden fence. They follow instructions during music and movement sessions, and enjoy sharing news and objects from home in 'show and tell' time while their peers sit quietly and listen. Practitioners encourage children to share resources, take turns and recognise their names on printed cards. Children move to the next stage in their learning and consequently are prepared for their subsequent move to school.

Parents play a key role in providing information from home about their children's interests and developmental stage. Before children first start at the nursery, parents complete a booklet containing all the relevant information about their child. Information is updated by questionnaires used in the 'parents in partnership' system. This helps practitioners identify any areas of development that need additional support to ensure that good progress continues in all areas of development. Practitioners quickly build good relationships with both the children and their parents and share ideas with them to continue to extend their children's learning at home. Each child has a file containing their individual learning journey. Children enjoy taking these home overnight to share their achievements with their families.

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

Children quickly settle within the nursery. Practitioners gently remind children of rules to be kind to each other, to use their 'walking feet' within the group rooms, to share toys and take turns. Consequently, children are well behaved as they join in activities with their peers. By maintaining consistent boundaries that children understand, practitioners foster an environment in which children feel emotionally secure. In turn, children rapidly become active learners and make good progress in their development. Due to the location of the nursery, many children regularly experience separation from one of their parents as they

are deployed abroad for significant periods of time. Practitioners are able to offer emotional support to the remaining parent and to the children, who are encouraged to talk about their feelings. Children regularly bring in their 'Blueies' to complete letters and drawings in the nursery to post to their absent parent. Consequently, children's emotional development is well supported within the nursery enabling them to continue to make good progress.

The nursery has an established key person system that supports all the children. During their first few weeks, children are observed to see which practitioner they naturally seek support and security from. In this way, children generally self-select their own key person who then takes on that formal role. Consequently, children rapidly feel secure in the nursery and continue to learn and develop. The key person is responsible for passing information onto the parents and to complete records and information about the children. Children are designated a temporary key person until they have selected their own key person, to ensure that all information is passed to and from parents. In addition to the detailed information contained in children's pre-admission booklet, parents can talk to the key person about the specific care needs of their children. This may include sleep patterns, feeding and weaning routines, potty training and dietary requirements. This results in children's individual needs being effectively met. When children are collected at the end of each day, the significant information about the day and care issues is passed to parents, maintaining a clear two-way channel for information. Before children move from the younger group room to the older group, children visit the new environment, initially for short periods of time and then longer periods, prior to making a permanent move. The timing of the move and length of transition is dependent on children's individual learning and developmental stage. When children prepare to leave the nursery in order to start school, teachers from the local schools visit the nursery and children visit the new setting. This is a valuable experience for the children who are able to discuss any concerns they have with practitioners and parents to make the transition as smooth as possible. Due to the location of the nursery, there are times when children have little time to prepare to move away from the nursery. This can impact on the children leaving and their friends remaining in the nursery. Practitioners effectively manage this by regularly and sensitively talking to children about moving and missing their friends. Through this, children are aware of sudden separation from peers to reduce anxiety. When children leave at short notice, the nursery arrange to pass the children's individual learning journals to the children's new setting. This ensures accurate progress levels are received by that setting, enabling them to continue supporting the children at a suitable level.

Practitioners act as positive role models for children and encourage them to adopt healthy lifestyle choices. Children independently wash their hands before eating food and after using the toilet. Physical activity is encouraged to keep children fit by using climbing frames, balance beams, large car tyres and ride-on toys. By using these resources, children make good progress in their physical development. Children are taught to protect themselves from the sun. Practitioners apply sun cream to all the children before they go outside in summer sunshine and children learn to put on their sun hats before they go out to play. If children forget to bring their own hat or sun cream from home, they are able to use hats and cream supplied by the nursery. Children enjoy finding their name on a list for practitioners to sign when their cream has been applied. The nursery provides a balanced and healthy selection of meals and snacks for the children to enjoy. Children are

encouraged to try new foods, however, if they have a strong dislike for something, practitioners will give them alternative food while maintaining a nutritious diet. Menus are planned in four-weekly cycles, and examples displayed on the website and in hard-copy format for parents to see. If parents do not want their children to have hot lunches, fresh sandwiches are made with a selection of suitable fillings. Individual children's preferences are clearly displayed in the kitchen for all practitioners to refer to. Children are taught how to keep safe by discussing who they can talk to if they feel worried or concerned. Through this, children feel confident to talk to practitioners as they play and learn in a safe environment.

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

All requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are effectively met. The nursery has effective safeguarding procedures in place that all practitioners and management are familiar with. All practitioners are recruited using effective methods to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. During a three month induction period, management ensure all new practitioners are familiar with all safeguarding policies and procedures and health and safety processes. Consequently, all practitioners have a sound knowledge and understanding of how to keep children safe from harm. Good health and hygiene routines are adhered to, which protect children's well-being. All practitioners are made aware of children's individual dietary needs. Food allergies are made clear through a list of children's names, specific allergy details, and days that they attend the nursery displayed in both the milk and main kitchen, and within each of the relevant group rooms. The cook ensures that food is clearly labelled and that alternative meals are available for all children who are either allergic to or have a strong dislike to the food offered on any particular day. Consequently, all children receive a balanced diet that is suited to their dietary and medical needs.

The educational programmes are effectively monitored. Managers ensure that all children's records are kept up to date and that tracking methods of children's progress are accurate and easily accessible. Individual files are reviewed by management on a six-monthly basis. The systems used to track progress are well established and ensure that managers and practitioners can quickly identify any emerging gaps in development. Strategies are put in place and external advice is sought, so that children consistently move to the next stage in their learning. Management value the benefits of effective self-evaluation in order to continually improve the delivery of teaching and care given within the nursery. Views are sought from parents through regular questionnaires. If parents have any significant concerns about the nursery, they are invited to a meeting to discuss the issues. Steps to resolve concerns are planned in partnership with parents, management and practitioners. Managers and practitioners meet on a regular basis to evaluate the delivery of care and education. In addition to group meetings, managers undertake supervision sessions and annual appraisals with each practitioner to maintain high standards of care and learning. Both managers and practitioners value the importance of accessing relevant training to further extend their already good understanding and knowledge of children's learning and developmental needs. After they have attended specific training courses or workshops, practitioners are encouraged to cascade the information gained to their colleagues so that

all children benefit from the knowledge gained. Consequently, children continue to be supported in an effective way to promote good progress.

Partnerships with parents, external professionals and local schools are strong. Managers identify external agencies and professionals when needed to support individual children or issues within the nursery. Parents are encouraged to use a 'parents in partnership' board to feed in new information about their children and to find out new information to support them. Parents generally speak highly of the care and support children receive, in particular parents with children who have special educational needs/and or disabilities praise the nursery for a sensitive and smooth transition to school. Consequently, all children are effectively supported and make good progress across all areas of learning and development.

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	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	EY407134
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	966833
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	56
Number of children on roll	46
Name of provider	Merry Poppets Nursery Limited
Date of previous inspection	19/07/2010
Telephone number	01462 752 855

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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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Piccadilly Gate
Store St
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M1 2WD

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