

Pippin Pre-School Group

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	219303
Inspection date	14/05/2009
Inspector	Kelly Eyre
Setting address	Roecroft Centre, Church Road, Stotfold, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 4NE
Telephone number	01462 834897
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Description of the setting

Pippin Pre-school Group is run by a voluntary management committee. The group has been established in excess of 37 years and has occupied the current premises since 1994. The group is located within the Roecroft Centre in Stotfold, Hertfordshire. There are three main rooms and children have access to a secure outside play area. A slope to the main entrance means that the premises are accessible.

The setting receives funding for early education. It is open each weekday during term-time only and sessions are from 09:00 to 12:00, with afternoon sessions from 13:00 to 15:30 on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. There is a lunch club each day from 12:00 to 13:00. The setting also provides before school care and these sessions are from 07:45 to 09:00. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register to provide 36 places and there are currently 49 children attending who are within this age group. The setting serves a wide catchment area. A small number of children attend other settings such as childminders. The setting currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The setting is also registered to offer care to children aged over five years. This provision is registered by Ofsted on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. Children occupying these places share the same facilities as the children in the early years age range. There are currently seven children on roll in this age range.

There are nine staff members. Of these, three hold relevant childcare qualifications and four are currently working towards a qualification.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the quality of the provision is good. A key strength is the good organisation of resources, meaning that children become confident in making choices about their play and are therefore active in their own learning. Staff are experienced and vigilant, consistently offering children appropriate support, and thus ensuring that they are always included and can participate meaningfully in all activities. The manager and staff have a positive approach to self-evaluation, realistically identifying the setting's strengths and weaknesses. They implement clear plans for ongoing improvements, helping to make sure that the setting is responsive to the needs of the children attending.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- update the setting's policies and procedures so that these relate to the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage
- develop further the assessment and planning procedures to include more

detail regarding initial assessments and to ensure that children's next developmental steps are consistently fed into the overall planning.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The manager supports staff well, providing clear direction and thereby ensuring that children's daily experiences are consistent and positive. The implementation of appropriate policies and procedures supports the efficient running of the setting, ensuring that children are offered a safe, secure environment. However, some information within the policies is out-of-date and means that parents and staff are not fully informed in order to promote children's ongoing welfare. Appropriate risk assessments cover all areas, and staff carry out daily safety checks of the building and outdoor area. Explanations from staff mean that children are gaining a clear understanding of safety issues such as how to use the static play equipment safely. Thorough procedures for safeguarding children ensure that their welfare is promoted and they are protected at all times. This area is further supported by rigorous staff checks to ensure their suitability.

The conscientious approach to ongoing self-evaluation and the ability to develop clear plans for the future demonstrate the setting's good potential to continuously improve the outcomes for children. There is a positive attitude to feedback and this is actively sought from staff, parents and children. Examples of recent improvements include the introduction of a library, enabling children to choose their own books to read at home and thus offering further opportunities for development in this area.

The setting works exceptionally well with parents and carers, ensuring that there is a thorough exchange of information in order to promote children's learning and development. For example, parents are well informed of their children's daily activities and progress through ongoing discussions with staff, regular informative newsletters, comprehensive written reports and parents' evenings. The excellent staff preparation for parents' evenings means that parents receive a full and detailed account of their child's progress and have the opportunity to discuss this and add their contributions.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

The provision of a wide range of activities and play opportunities means that children make good progress in all areas of learning. Daily activity planning is based on children's requests, daily evaluations of activities and information from children's assessments. This helps to ensure that children's individual development is promoted and they are offered appropriate activities that capture their interest. However, their development is not promoted to the optimum as the planning and assessment methods do not consistently show details of initial assessments and the next steps to feed into planning.

Children's learning and understanding are promoted because staff play alongside them and offer gentle support and encouragement. For example, a staff member

joins children in a role play scenario about travelling, encouraging them to discuss their possible destinations. Staff also utilise incidental learning opportunities to extend children's knowledge. For example, children engaged in a craft activity talk about the shapes they are cutting out.

Children are actively encouraged to explore and understand their environment. For example, children enthusiastically use magnifying glasses to explore the toy bugs and creatures, then take the magnifying glasses around the room to examine other objects. Children's natural curiosity is encouraged as they participate in experimental activities such as exploring ice cubes and noting the changes as they mix corn flour with water.

The attention to detail in planning of the environment means that it is stimulating to children, with many attractive displays and accessible resources. Children are therefore encouraged to explore and make choices about their play. The good provision of resources means that children are offered many opportunities to write for different purposes. For example, children engaged in role play use calculators and pretend to write their answers on the nearby paper. The thoughtful provision of additional resources means children's learning is extended and reinforced. For example, simple illustrations near the sand tray help children understand concepts such as 'empty, full, half full, pour, wet and dry'. The good organisation means that children are offered a range of opportunities that further promote their development. For example, their appreciation of reading is enhanced as they choose books from the setting's library.

Children are offered opportunities to learn about the relevance of healthy lifestyles. They explore physical skills and improve their co-ordination as they participate in activities such as hopscotch, throwing and catching bean bags, crawling through tunnels and playing basketball. Colourful posters and displays further reinforce children's knowledge of issues such as healthy eating and personal hygiene.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met