

Inspection of Portico Poppets

1 Leicester Street, Thatto Heath, St. Helens, Merseyside WA9 5QH

Inspection date: 26 July 2022

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

The outstanding care and the bonds that children make with staff at the nursery have an extremely positive effect on their future. Children cuddle staff members when they arrive and excitedly share news from home. Staff respond quickly to information shared from home, such as a baby taking their first steps. They immediately plan activities to support growing physical skills. This helps to ensure that the strong link between home and nursery continually develops.

Children have access to a well-resourced and meticulously planned outdoor environment. They engage in challenging physical activities. They use tricycles to transport crates to build a bridge. Staff suggest adding cones and introducing 'stop' and 'go' as part of their play. Children excitedly respond to these ideas and shout instructions to each other. Younger children are supported to climb across the bridge by caring and encouraging staff.

Staff work extremely closely with parents and build excellent relationships from the start. Because of the very close relationships, parents are more able to share any issues that are worrying them. The impact of this is that outcomes significantly improve for children.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are extremely well supported. Staff quickly identify if children need extra support with their learning. They take prompt action to discuss this support with parents, and use the exceptionally good links they have with other professionals to work closely with them. This ensures that all children receive consistent, high-quality care and make excellent progress. Additional funding is used well. The manager precisely finds resources, such as sensory balls, which help to promote children's brain development and support their individual needs.
- Staff know all children exceptionally well. Planning and assessment of children's learning are well designed and evaluated regularly. The carefully planned curriculum provides children with rich, motivating learning experiences to ensure that every child's progress is maximised. Staff ensure there are continuous opportunities for children's ongoing language development. Each activity that is planned for children has a vocabulary list for staff, to ensure that children hear an abundance of new words. Even the youngest children can be heard repeating and using new words. This ensures a solid foundation for future learning.
- Staff skilfully support all children to manage their feelings. There is a sharp focus on teaching children to share and how to regulate their behaviour. Staff support children in understanding strategies to help manage emotions. Children who are feeling overwhelmed can take themselves to a calm area, and staff model deep

breathing. Children are successful in recognising when they need to relax or calm down.

- Staff positively support children to develop a strong understanding of healthy foods. At snack time, children talk about the foods they like and enjoy. Staff skilfully encourage them to make connections between the colours of food and their health benefits. Children learn new words, such as 'calcium' and 'iron', to broaden their knowledge. They confidently engage in these conversations and learn to recognise healthy foods.
- Staff are enthusiastic about new training and how this has an impact on the environment and their knowledge. For example, staff access training on the use of natural resources. They observe that toddlers transport resources around the room. At staff meetings they discuss and evaluate the impact of the training and continually make changes to the environment. As a result, children make excellent progress in their ability to stay engaged in their play.
- The management team is completely dedicated to the children and families in its care. Additional support is offered to families experiencing hardships. The management team provided a free meal service for families during lockdown. The manager works tirelessly to further strengthen the secure link between home and the nursery. This ensures the highest possible outcome is reached for all children.
- Leaders and staff continually reflect on their practice. The manager places a strong emphasis on enhancing staff's already excellent skills. She is passionate about her own and the team's professional development. The manager provides regular coaching to ensure that all staff consistently deliver the highest quality of teaching. She utilises the skills of the more experienced staff to mentor and support new staff. Their well-being is given a high priority and their ongoing development is individually personalised by the manager. Staff report that they do not feel overloaded and are very well supported by the manager.
- Children remember what they have learned over time and this is demonstrated in their play. For example, they recall learning about Buckingham Palace during the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. They use this knowledge to enthusiastically suggest building a castle out of cardboard boxes.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager has an exceptionally strong focus on safeguarding children and families. The environment, both inside and outside, is very well maintained to minimise hazards and keep children safe. Staff are alert to the signs of abuse and know the process to follow if they are concerned a child is at risk of harm. The manager leads safeguarding training for the group of nurseries and takes the lead in initiatives led by the Department of Education to improve outcomes for children. Staff refresh their training regularly to ensure their knowledge is up to date. The manager shares updates and information on safeguarding issues, such as domestic abuse, during staff meetings.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY314827
Local authority	St Helens
Inspection number	10129172
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	1 to 4
Total number of places	50
Number of children on roll	44
Name of registered person	Portico Day Nurseries Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP900806
Telephone number	01744 811112
Date of previous inspection	4 May 2016

Information about this early years setting

Portico Poppets registered in 2005. The nursery employs 10 members of childcare staff. Of these, nine hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The manager holds early years professional status. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, 7.30am to 6pm, for 51 weeks of the year. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Stacey Wendrenski

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The special educational needs coordinator spoke to the inspector about how they support children with SEND.
- Children spoke to/communicated with the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.

We carried out this inspection 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.

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