



Rainbow Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	305261
Inspection date	12 December 2006
Inspector	Judith Anne Kerr / Janice Shaw
Setting Address	Community Centre, Old Road, Handforth, Cheshire, SK9 3AZ
Telephone number	01625 543518
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Registered person	Rainbow Pre-School Handforth
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

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

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Rainbow Pre-School was registered in 1962. It is situated in the Youth Centre close to the centre of Handforth. The pre-school has use of the main hall and two smaller group rooms. The adjacent field is available for outside play.

The pre-school is registered to care for a maximum of 35 children. It is open Monday to Friday from 09.15 to 15.15 during term time only. Children may attend for either a half or full day session.

There are 41 children on roll including 30 funded children. Children with learning difficulties or with English as a second language are supported in the group. There are six qualified staff who work with the children. The setting is supported by the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health and nutritional needs are well promoted due to the effective procedures and practices followed by staff. They are cared for in a warm and exceptionally clean environment where staff follow thorough hygiene procedures to prevent the spread of infection. Children are developing positive hygiene habits through routines and commendable support from staff. They are encouraged to undertake their own personal care. They wash their hands before eating and after visiting the toilet and they readily discuss with staff the need to wash to remove germs. Younger children are appropriately supported in nappy changing routines and are encouraged to follow a basic toilet training programme. The availability of a portable sink in the main playroom allows children to conveniently wash their hands after messy activities and fosters their independence skills well.

Children thrive and their health and growth are well promoted with the availability of a nutritious diet at snack time. They enjoy a range of fruit and occasional savoury items, such as breadsticks. They sample different food products on outings to a local supermarket where they observe and discuss fresh fruit and vegetables. Children eagerly describe their visit and use the colourful and interesting display of photographs on the wall to remind them of this. Independence skills are not actively promoted as children cannot freely access fresh drinking water throughout the day or comfortably choose the order in which they consume their food and drink at snack time.

Indoor and outdoor activities provide opportunities for children to take part in regular physical play and make progress in their physical development. They gain confidence and learn to move with control as they use their bodies in different ways when they negotiate a path for their buggy around the playroom or join in games with staff, directly aimed at developing their spatial awareness. For example, children enjoy balancing on the wobble boards and playing in pairs finding their way to the station when the music stops. Children enjoy playing with different consistencies, such as glue, water and Christmas cake mixtures. They develop their fine motor skills with good use of pencils, scissors and brushes. Children are encouraged to develop their self-help skills when they put outdoor clothing on or choose to dress up in imaginative games.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a very warm and welcoming environment. The playrooms are made very bright, light and airy with displays of children's artwork and photographs of activities, giving them ownership of the environment. Children use a broad range of toys and equipment suitable to their age and stage of development. Different play areas and resources are clearly identified within the large hall with, for example, a comfortable book area, creative areas and a role play area with dressing-up clothes and house play. Children benefit from the ability to move about freely between play areas when they can choose their own games and organise their own thinking. Safety standards are maintained and resources are cleaned and checked on a regular basis.

All safety equipment is in place and areas checked frequently to ensure that children are protected and staff have a sound knowledge of the health and safety procedures. The presence of ivy in the small play area poses a hazard to children. Their security in the setting is protected by a buzzer on internal doors and a bell externally to announce visitors. Rigorous outings procedures protect children effectively. Children respond well as they learn how to keep themselves safe. They follow very clear instructions and guidance from staff about not pointing scissors as they could hurt someone and to take care on the climbing frame as they may fall. Regular fire drills are carried out with the children so they quickly become aware of the routine. Children are well protected by staff who are confident and secure in their knowledge of child protection policies and procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children join their group each morning where they happily greet each other; when an occasional child takes a little longer to settle he is offered cuddles and extra support from staff. Children make informed decisions about their play when everyone enjoys gathering together initially with their group to learn about the day's activities and events. Young children enjoy exploring and investigating the developmentally appropriate selection of play opportunities available. They rush to put on their favourite dressing-up clothes, to become a camel or a fairy for the morning or they join their friends and play with the train track. The children are showing emerging confidence and independence as they begin to select their own toys.

Children's desire to learn is stimulated by the varied range of activities organised. For example, they make Christmas cards and eye lashes for the camel at the creative table and explore the properties of water whilst using a range of containers. They love to engage in play with friends in the home corner or shop area and will often successfully transfer their game into other areas of the room. Children persist at their play for good periods of time and concentrate very well in the group times that are organised by staff. This encourages their sharing and listening skills. They are inquisitive and interested in the resources made available to them. Opportunities for younger children are maximised because staff have a secure understanding and knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. This framework is competently used to differentiate activities for younger children. Children's progress is regularly assessed by staff who effectively identify the key skills achieved. This enables staff to build on the current good practice and develop meaningful learning opportunities for the younger children. In addition, developmental records and play plans are completed on these children. Staff make effective use of observations on younger children in order to identify where the children are at in their learning, ready for when they turn three years and begin the implementation of the Foundation Stage curriculum.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children arrive happily and settle quickly. They are keen to begin activities and become animated as they engage with the staff and their peers. The pre-school manager and deputy are qualified teachers and have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Other staff have attended training and have a sound understanding of the required curriculum. Overall, this ensures children receive a full programme of good quality education. Curriculum planning is prepared in advance. Staff plan purposeful activities which

provide opportunities for teaching both inside and outside. Opportunities for children to engage in activities that they can initiate themselves with appropriate intervention by staff are good. Consequently, children are consistently engaged in the learning process, helping them to make progress along the stepping-stones. Opportunities to arouse children's thinking are well promoted as staff use excellent questioning techniques that stimulate the children's interests and enables them to build on what they already know. Curriculum planning and assessment systems are used well to ensure children's next steps are identified. However, procedures to involve parents in their children's assessments are not fully implemented. As a result, parents are not always involved in their children's learning.

Children are confident to make their own choices from the wide range of play and learning opportunities provided on a daily basis. They direct their own play and show care and concern for one another. For example, they apply a cold pack to one of the children who has 'hurt his head' so 'it will make him feel better'. The children are developing friendships and choose who they pair up with when going outside. They are familiar with the routines of the day and respond well to instructions. For example, they know without being told to wait at the lamp post while a safety check is made of the outdoor area; children listen quietly to a sequence of instructions for a new transport game and then are able to follow them. The children speak openly and confidently and receive regular opportunities to sing rhymes and participate fully in exciting and interesting stories, such as 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. Children receive regular opportunities to attempt writing for different purposes, develop language for thinking and extend their imagination through story telling. Regular opportunities to recognise their names as they self-register upon arrival and again prior to snacks allow children to understand print has a meaning. They receive opportunities to link sounds to letters during circle time. A well labelled environment helps children learn that words have meaning and a well stocked and welcoming book area contributes to children's enjoyment as they share books and listen attentively to stories, such as 'The Teddy Bears' Christmas'. Many children count reliably up to 10 and beyond and complete puzzles with 12 or more pieces. They receive varied opportunities to develop all concepts of mathematics through purposeful activities and excellent questioning techniques used by staff. These include measuring ingredients for Christmas cakes and questioning children about heavy and light items in the water. Opportunities for children to develop their skills in designing and making are actively promoted as the pre-school encourages them to construct and build designs using different media. The children are able to express and communicate their ideas in role-play in various scenarios. This enables them to extend their imagination and act out real experiences. For example, children enjoy taking on different roles in the play shop, this includes writing messages, working the till and serving customers. Trips out to post Christmas cards they have written allow the children to understand the wider world.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children develop a positive attitude towards others and gain a good understanding about the wider world through an interesting range of resources and planned activities. They celebrate festivals, such as Christmas, Hanukkah and Eid, which successfully promotes a positive attitude amongst the children to different cultures and beliefs.

Children's behaviour is very good, they learn to follow rules and listen to instructions when they gather together at different times during the play session. They eagerly help to tidy away the toys when they hear the soothing classical music played in the background. Children move about purposefully, putting toys away and helping their friends, whilst eagerly anticipating the next part of the session. Children receive regular praise and encouragement to help them to gain confidence and positive self-esteem. This positive attitude and approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The partnership with parents and carers of children receiving nursery education is good. They are greeted warmly by staff and are very happy with the setting and the care provided. Parents know their child's key worker and feel well informed of their children's progress through the informal verbal exchange of information. Parents of children in receipt of funding for nursery education have access to their child's developmental records and play plans that are prepared using the Foundation Stage curriculum. In addition, parents feel involved in their children's learning because details of current projects are displayed. However, parents are not provided with opportunities to contribute to their child's written assessments. The group's policies and procedures are easily accessible to parents at all times, furthermore, newsletters and short notes keep parents informed of all relevant issues relating to the smooth running of the group.

The pre-school is using the 'Birth to three matters' framework to support the programme of activities for younger children. In addition, developmental records and play plans are completed on these children. Staff make effective use of observations on younger children in order to identify where the children are at in their learning, ready for when they turn three years and begin the implementation of the Foundation Stage curriculum.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management of the setting is good. The staff work well as a team and benefit from support and guidance from the very experienced manager. As a result, all staff demonstrate a strong commitment to providing a service that is underpinned with quality and is conducive to the needs of the children. Systems for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of the nursery education within the setting are good, and the manager and staff team have an effective understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and the 'Birth to three matters' framework. All staff contribute to the planning, as a result, children receive a broad and balanced range of learning opportunities to help move them on to their next steps in learning. The well-organised and carefully prepared environment and expertise amongst the staff team ensures all children are able to access the full programme of activities which promotes all the early learning goals. As a result, children receive good opportunities to build on what they know and learn new skills. All staff undertake observations and assessments on the children, as a result, systems for identifying what children need to learn next are good.

Effective systems are in place, and followed, to ensure that all staff are appropriately vetted and continue to be suitable to work with children. Clear guidelines identify procedures for staff induction and a team appraisal system has been introduced to support staff and identify their future training needs. The amount of training that staff participate in, with which to continually improve their knowledge and experience, is commendable.

All policies and procedures are individual to the setting, comprehensive and fully support the expert practice of knowledgeable and skilled staff, who consistently give utmost priority to protecting all children, promoting their well being and supporting all to develop their potential. Confidentiality is maintained throughout and policies and procedures are readily available for staff and parents. Indoor space is laid out to provide children with realistic and challenging play opportunities. There are very good staffing levels in place ,which contributes significantly to children's care and development.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the pre-school agreed to ensure clearances are available for all staff to demonstrate their suitability to care for children, and assess their strengths and weaknesses relating to nursery education to enhance existing good practice.

There are now secure systems in place for vetting staff. The setting now use Capita for vetting staff and understand all issues relating to the importance of vetting staff. All staff are cleared and documentation seen. The manager and all staff contribute to the ongoing assessment and evaluation of the pre-school. This enables them to work towards the continuing improvement of the setting.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take action to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that children cannot access any poisonous plant materials

- further develop children's independence by making fresh drinking water freely available throughout the day. Consider ways in which children can comfortably choose the order in which they consume their food and drink.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- further develop opportunities for parents to contribute to their children's assessments.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk