



Rainbow Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY240964
Inspection date	03 May 2006
Inspector	Hazel Taylor
Setting Address	South Dale, Caistor, Market Rasen, Lincolnshire, LN7 6LY
Telephone number	01472 859979
E-mail	
Registered person	Rainbow Pre-School Committee
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Rainbow Pre-school has been established for over 20 years but re-registered in 2002 following a move to their own premises, a mobile classroom unit, situated in the grounds of Caistor Primary School. The pre-school provides full-day care for the local town and the surrounding villages.

The pre-school is registered to care for no more than 18 children, from 2 to under 5 years, at any one time. There are currently 28 children on roll and, of these, 22

children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The playgroup has systems in place to support children who have special educational needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school opens, during school term times, between 09:00 and 15:15 on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, and between 09:00 and 11:45 on Friday.

Nine staff work with the children on both a full and part time basis. Half of the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. Three members of staff are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The pre-school is affiliated to the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff promote children's good health and well-being effectively as they are proactive in recognising and reducing possible risks of infection and illness. Their procedures for managing accidents, administering medication and caring for any child who becomes ill are good and ensure that children are well cared for and that their individual needs are met. Children are developing their own understanding and awareness of good health and hygiene through helpful explanations and daily routines, such as regular hand-washing, which reinforce good practice and act as helpful reminders to encourage their independence. Children show a good understanding and willingness to keep themselves healthy and safe from infection.

Children enjoy a variety of nutritious snacks and can easily access drinking water throughout the session. They talk positively about how eating fruit and drinking milk makes them healthy. Snacks provided are wholesome, include fresh fruit and vegetables, and take account of the individual and cultural needs of all children. Whenever possible, staff encourage children to actively contribute to the development of healthy eating and positive food choices by sharing responsibility for decisions about their drinks and snacks. Children's health and dietary needs are met effectively by staff and parents sharing information.

Children develop physical control in stimulating daily indoor and outdoor experiences which contribute to their good health. Staff have a secure understanding of each child's stage of development which means the youngest children are given rich sensory experiences and different opportunities to explore and investigate. Older children are gaining competent co-ordination of their bodies and are developing a positive attitude to physical exercise as they learn about the importance of activity in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. They delight in the challenges of a wide range of energetic activities which they tackle enthusiastically. Staff develop meaningful relationships with the children which fosters their emotional well-being and ensures that they feel confident and secure as they explore their play environment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are secure and parents are welcome in this setting. Staff organise indoor and outdoor space effectively, creating a child-friendly environment which enables children to explore and take risks while being appropriately supervised. Good procedures and consistent risk assessment by staff ensures that all areas accessed by children are safe and any hazards are minimised. Children begin to take responsibility for themselves and are encouraged to make safe decisions about their play and learning as they choose from a broad range of good quality toys and play materials both indoors and outdoors. Children enjoy accessing developmentally appropriate resources and can move around safely and confidently to use them imaginatively. Children learn how to keep themselves safe on outings with the encouragement and guidance of staff.

Children are cared for by qualified and experienced staff and thorough clearance procedures ensure they are suitably checked and vetted. Children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted by the knowledgeable practice of the staff, underpinned by the good quality and accuracy of their supporting documentation. Clear, written policies and procedures ensure that parents are aware of any steps the staff will take to maintain children's safety and deal with any accidents that may occur, including applying first aid. Children are safeguarded because staff have a secure understanding of their responsibilities regarding child protection procedures and the signs and symptoms that may indicate that a child is being abused.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the pre-school and explore their surroundings with enthusiasm, confidence and growing independence. They benefit from the care and encouragement of committed staff in a harmonious learning environment. Children relate well to each other and socialise with others as they play in groups participating in a range of interesting activities. Children are becoming good communicators, they chat confidently between themselves, and the staff make good use of conversations to extend children's thinking and play. Children are beginning to use their imaginations creatively as they take part in a variety of role-play activities. They develop their physical skills regularly, both indoors and outside. Children under three are cared for in the same room as older children and staff evaluate the organisation of resources and planning in order to ensure that they are developmentally appropriate and provide a range of experiences which increase children's learning. The youngest children achieve well because staff are suitably skilled and are developing their use of early years guidance, such as the 'Birth to three matters' framework, to provide good quality care and learning opportunities.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and work together to provide a broad range of interesting

activities to help children to learn. They use effective questioning to promote children's thinking and their enthusiasm and approach provide a happy environment in which children can enjoy learning. Planning and assessment systems are benefiting from current review, there have been some significant developments and they generally provide a suitable framework to help children make sound progress towards the early learning goals. These systems, however, are not consistently used effectively to ensure some activities will be sufficiently adapted or extended to fully support differing abilities. Children's individual progress is observed, although information gained from these assessments is not used methodically to plan the next stages of their development, which impacts on the challenges provided and the individual progress children make. Therefore, the older and more able children are not always challenged sufficiently in all areas of their learning.

Children count confidently and are beginning to compare numbers in everyday activities and daily routines. They begin to make sense of the world around them as they explore and investigate a variety of materials and learn about the environment through planned topic work. They are aware of their own bodies and their ability to use their senses. They are confident and skilled speakers and use words effectively to convey their experiences both real and imaginary. They are able to sit and listen to stories and also offer answers to questions. Children are making sound progress in both mark making and writing and some are becoming skilled at writing their own names. They are also able to treat books with respect and use these for pleasure as they are aware that they contain stories which they enjoy. Children are keen to learn and can concentrate well, showing perseverance, in activities they are interested in. They co-operate and negotiate roles, for example, when acting out their imagined ideas in role-play and value one another's ideas. Children enjoy exploring creativity and talk about textures as they access resources and use a range of media. Their physical skills develop and improve through a wide range of experiences, including movement to music.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are warmly welcomed into the group and a good range of resources encourages children to be aware of their own and other cultures. These positive images of the wider community enable children to develop self-esteem and a sense of their own worth. The pre-school has effective arrangements in place to care for children with special needs. Children are very well behaved and are able to share and show consideration for others. They respond well to reminders to care for resources and each other, and staff have high expectations of their behaviour. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Strong relationships between staff and parents means that information regarding children's individual care needs is shared and used effectively and this contributes significantly to the children's feelings of security and well-being. Written information for parents regarding the way in which the pre-school works and the details of the nursery education curriculum has been updated to take account of recent changes. Consequently, parents are able to reflect on care practices and feel appropriately

informed about the provision made for their children's nursery education.

Partnership with parents for nursery education is satisfactory. Staff regularly talk to parents about what their children have been doing in the session and their current achievements. Key workers ensure that parents receive regular verbal information about how their child is developing and progressing. Parents' views are actively sought prior to their children beginning at the group so that staff are aware of some of the children's developmental needs and interests. However, as yet, there are few systematic arrangements for staff and parents to share their observations and assessments of children's progress towards the early learning goals, within the Foundation Stage, or to plan for the next steps in children's learning. Because of this, parents are not consistently enabled to become more meaningfully involved with their children's learning, to fully contribute to their development, and therefore, to effectively help their children make best progress. Children benefit from their parents' involvement in topic work which enables them to follow through the children's learning at home and contributes to their development and progress.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The management team have made a number of changes to practice to improve the care and well-being of the children in their care. They have developed strong aims and values for the provision and have a clear vision for continuing the improvements for children's care and education. They establish good training opportunities to enhance the quality of care given to children and an action plan is already in place to formalise staff's knowledge and understanding of the needs and outcomes for the very youngest children.

The organisation within the playgroup meets the needs of the children well. There is a good balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities to extend play and learning opportunities for the range of children attending the setting. Staff effectively organise time to allow the children to be cared for in small and mixed age groups which ensures that they receive suitable levels of care appropriate to their developmental stages. The good ratios of staff to children ensure that children receive a lot of individual attention which promotes their sense of belonging and self-worth. All legally required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place, regularly reviewed and fully shared with parents.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. Children's care and learning are supported through the effective organisation of the setting and the ability of the enthusiastic and committed staff team, headed by knowledgeable and experienced management. Staff development and regular staff meetings contribute to the smooth running of the playgroup. There are appropriate recruitment and induction procedures in place. The management team is well aware of the weaknesses for children's education and what needs to be done to improve. The changes to planning systems, whilst sound, are not established enough to have yet had an impact on comprehensively improving children's nursery education. Staff carry out some regular evaluation of the provision, however, further methodical

review and refinement of the monitoring system will enhance planning, so that it builds on what all children need to do next to secure best progression in all areas of their learning.

Overall the provider meets the needs of the range of children cared for.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the setting was asked to develop the staff's awareness and understanding of effective ways to manage children's behaviour, taking into account their age and stage of development. Since then further training has been accessed and the pre-school has developed a clear and positive statement on behaviour management which supports staff in establishing consistent expectations for children's behaviour taking account of their level of maturity. There is a calm atmosphere in which children show confidence in their dealings with staff and peers and where older children begin to understand turn-taking and the rules needed for simple games.

At the last nursery education inspection the setting was asked to improve the opportunities for children to independently access the full range of creative resources, develop monitoring and evaluation systems to ensure that children's learning is broad and balanced over time and ensure that activities are consistently adapted so that all children are able to gain the most from the learning opportunity and learning materials. Since then the pre-school has evaluated their learning zones and made a number of changes to the art and craft area so that children have easier access to a wider choice of creative resources which they can use imaginatively to express their ideas and meet challenges in art and design. Discussion with staff and consideration of documents indicates that planning and assessment systems have been reviewed and staff have developed their practice in the light of various training and support opportunities. The system for planning is still being developed to relate more closely to the stepping stones and link meaningfully with assessment. This will ensure a broad-based curriculum that links suitable themes with practical play activities and which helps children of all abilities make sound developmental progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of their learning. However, further refinement of the monitoring and evaluation systems is also still ongoing with reference to current guidance. The pre-school intends that their evaluative judgements are used with increasing effectiveness to enhance future planning and secure best progression for all individuals. This aspect of their development will continue as a recommendation of this inspection.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since 1 April 2004

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.

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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):

- continue to consolidate and formalise staff's knowledge and understanding of the needs and outcomes for children from birth to three by using an approach in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

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):

- develop further the use of observations of children, purposeful assessments of achievement, and information gained from parents to plan the next steps in learning for individual children
- continue to develop planning systems, based on children's interests and what they need to do next, so that activities are consistently adapted to enable children of all abilities to gain the most from the activity and the learning materials, and to ensure that all children can achieve appropriately in all areas of their learning
- continue to refine the monitoring systems so that evidence and evaluative judgements which take account of how children are responding to planned provision are used with increasing effectiveness, to inform future planning and to secure best progression for all children's learning.

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