



## Witchford Rackham Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	221733
<b>Inspection date</b>	10 May 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Clare Elizabeth Pook
<b>Setting Address</b>	Witchford Rackham Primary School, 83 Main Street, Witchford, Ely, Cambridgeshire, CB6 2HQ
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<b>E-mail</b>	pre-school@witchford.info
<b>Registered person</b>	Witchford Rackham Playgroup
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Sessional care, Out of School 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](http://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?

Witchford Rackham Pre-School is a committee run group. It opened over 25 years ago. It operates from the ground floor of a two storey house, dedicated to the pre-school, located within the grounds of the Rackham Primary school in Witchford.

A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 9:05 to 11:45 and from 12:45 to 3:20 each day apart from Wednesday afternoons during term time. A play scheme is in operation during

some school holidays.

All children have access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area. There are currently 60 children from 2 to 5 years on roll. Of these 59 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs, and also supports children who speak English as an additional language. The pre-school employs 6 staff, 5 of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications to Level 3.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted by staff recognising and reducing possible risks. Staff take steps to prevent the spread of infection by washing the tables and their hands before snack time and encouraging children to wash their hands after toileting. Children understand the importance of good hygiene and know that washing hands helps to remove germs.

Children's healthy eating is promoted by encouraging children to bring in healthy snacks such as fresh fruit or raw vegetables. Children are able to access drinking water freely when they are thirsty in addition to the water and milk offered during the rolling snack time. Discussions about cleaning their teeth after meals and not having too many sugary drinks teaches children about keeping their body healthy. Visits from the dentist have supported this learning with the children.

Good arrangements are in place if children are ill. Staff are trained in administering first aid and have appropriate permissions and records in place regarding the administration of medication to children. They keep records of all accidents in the setting and inform parents.

Children get plenty of physical exercise. Staff organise the sessions so that children use the outdoor facilities for planned activities and free play times. Children confidently use a wide variety of large and small equipment. Children use cars and scooters outside negotiating space well. Children manipulate different consistencies of clay, slime and other soft materials. They use different sized paint brushes in their play to paint the shed and draw pictures on the patio. Children thread beads and create patterns using small pegs and hammer shapes with nails with precision. Children are learning about keeping their body healthy through discussions about protecting their skin from the sun by using sun cream and wearing hats.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure premises which is welcoming for children and parents. Doors are kept locked and staff supervise children coming into and leaving with parents and carers. The staff plan to extend the security by having a

buzzer system in place. The rooms are organised effectively, creating a child friendly environment which enables children to explore and take risks while being appropriately supervised. Adults are mostly deployed effectively, however at times staff are isolated in the messy play room which compromises their safety.

Clear policies and practices, including robust risk assessments, are in place to keep children safe on the premises and during outings. High ratios are maintained and hazards such as ponds are taken into account. Children learn about fire safety. They know the procedure for evacuating in an emergency and the staff regularly practise it with them.

Children use a comprehensive range of toys and equipment that are good quality and safe. They access resources independently. Equipment is kept clean and in a good state of repair and is frequently checked for safety. Children take part in woodwork activities and use hammer and nails safely under direct supervision of staff, who clearly explain to children about safety aspects.

Children are protected because staff understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. Children are cared for by adults who are vetted and have relevant experience, excellent knowledge and skills.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children access a wide range of activities, which staff thoughtfully plan and prepare, to encourage children to develop skills and have fun. Children benefit from a range of activities outside the playgroup. They go for local visits to the library, church and nature reserve. Adults plan these activities well, and use them effectively as opportunities to help children's learning. For example a visit to the church grounds is combined with learning about mini beasts and their environment.

Warm and caring relationships between adults and children are evident. They communicate easily with each other and this helps children to enjoy and achieve. Children work well alongside each other, sharing and taking turns fairly. They use the sand timer to assist them in deciding how long they have to play with the garage before letting someone else have a go. They co-operate well together completing floor puzzles and persevere although they are difficult.

Staff have a good understanding of how to accommodate younger children. They are aware of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and have started to integrate this into their planning, although they are not yet using it in practice. This is an area staff have identified for development.

### **Nursery education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

All of the staff working with funded children are well qualified and have a very good

knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. They plan meaningful activities that build on children's interests and enable children to learn across all areas. Key workers observe children each day and use their observations at key activities to assess children's progress towards the early learning goals. Staff use other experiences throughout the day to assess children for example in the role play area or whilst cutting or drawing. Staff clearly explain at the beginning of the session to the children what activities are set out so children feel confident to try new things. Staff support children well, interact and have fun playing alongside children. Staff help children to consolidate and extend their learning. Staff have good relationships with the children that encourage the children to become involved and to persevere with tasks such as completing difficult puzzles. Methods include open-ended questions, encouraging children to try new activities and introducing new vocabulary such as reflections.

Children are confident speakers who chat happily to their friends and staff. They listen attentively to stories and join in by asking questions about the bear's bed in 'my friend bear'. Children are learning letter sounds and many are able to sound out the letters in their name as they write it. Extensive labelling around the room helps children to understand that print carries meaning as well as being able to find resources easily. Children are encouraged to write their own names or draw freely on easels or at the graphics table.

Children use mathematical language readily talking about 'big bear' and 'more cars than you'. Children name shapes and relate them to objects around the room, for example 'the window is square'. Other shapes such as spirals are introduced through drawing, cutting and play dough activities. They count as part of everyday routines and have opportunities to find corresponding numbers on the board. Children use the sand timer to share resources and take turns.

Children are competent on the computer and enjoy using the keyboard and cash register in the home corner. Several opportunities are provided for children to examine objects and living things to find out more about them at the 'hands on' tables such as mini-beasts. This promotes children's investigative skills and natural curiosity. Children explore similarities, patterns and change through life cycles of butterflies and frogs and use magnifying glasses to look closely at the African snails.

Children sing familiar songs in group situations and are confident to make up their own songs and perform them in front of the class. Children use traditional and unfamiliar instruments such as African drums to explore rhythm and listen to different sounds they make. Children use their imagination to express their ideas in role play situations such as pretending to be doctors, or at the café, as well as drawing still life pictures of daffodils, or making 3D spiders. Staff encourage children to express their ideas on paper with paint to music. However, opportunities for children to freely access resources to create their designs, explore textures and experiment with ways of joining and assembling are limited.

## **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Staff understand policies on equal opportunities and work within them. Staff foster links with children's own cultures where relevant and gain information from parents on familiar words to use to help them feel secure and festivals they may celebrate. Children have access to a broad range of resources, play opportunities and activities, which reflect diversity and acknowledge cultural differences, for example multi-cultural dolls, dressing up, African drums. Children enjoy celebrating a range of festivals and value differing lifestyles, for example St George's day, Diwali.

Staff have set clear boundaries and have high expectations of children's behaviour that is appropriate to the age and stage of children's development. They make sure children are not bored or frustrated, but are busy and content. They direct children's energy into positive situations for example finding a special toys to play with. Children share and take turns well when using the scooters, trampoline and computer. Children are polite and well-mannered saying 'excuse me' as they pass by.

Children's self esteem is thoroughly promoted by praise from staff. Their work is valued and displayed attractively around the room. Children respond well to requests from staff to tidy up and work well to do this, again staff praise them for helping. Show and tell allows children to share experiences and special toys from home promoting a sense of belonging.

Children with special needs are valued and respected. Staff work closely with parents to ensure that the best support and care for their child is provided. Situations are handled sensitively and professionally. Additional help in the form of one to one workers is sort if necessary. Information is gathered from other professionals from their visits to the group and shared so that children feel secure and are fully included.

Partnership with parents and carers is good and contributes to the progress and well-being of children, including those who receive funded nursery education. Parents speak highly of the setting. Parents are fully informed about the Foundation Stage and are kept updated regularly through newsletters. Parents are able to speak to staff on a daily basis to exchange information or through their individual communications books. Regular parents evenings are held and reports issued on their children each term. Children's likes and dislikes are sort when children begin at the group and any additional comments from parents are recognised and acted upon. Notice boards keep parents updated on important issues and general information. Parents opinions and thoughts are sort through questionnaires which the staff act upon to improve their practice.

Children's Spiritual, Moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are happy and settled, enjoy activities and achieve well because staff create an environment where they have appropriate space and resources to do so. Adults working with children show care and concern for their welfare to give them a sense of

well-being and regular staff know them well. They have good levels of support to help them feel welcome, comfortable and at ease in the setting because the person in charge has a clear vision of how children thrive and uses her skills, knowledge and experience to lead by example. Robust procedures are in place for ensuring staff are suitable to work with children. Staff are suitably qualified and continue to develop personal and professional skills through training.

Experienced staff show high regard for children's health, well-being and enjoyment. They maintain and use appropriate forms of record keeping and refer to policies and procedures in order to promote children's care and learning. Information gathered from parents is made known to staff to ensure that their wishes are followed. This level of attention contributes to the continuity of children's care so that they feel secure. The rooms are set out attractively and are well organised so that children and staff can move around safely and easily access resources, although children and staff in the messy play room are sometimes isolated.

The quality of leadership and management is good.

Staff work well as a team are well trained and have good knowledge and understanding of how children learn. They are an enthusiastic and dedicated staff team who are aware of their roles and responsibilities and share good practices. Staff are carefully monitored and appraisals are in place. Staff are involved in monitoring each other, so their individual strengths and weakness can be identified and used to move forward. Staff are motivated and keen to improve the care and education for all children. They have a clear vision and use action plans as well as questionnaires from parents to develop practice. Relationships with the committee are good and regular meetings are held to exchange information.

Overall, the provision meets the range of children's needs who attend.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Very good progress has been made since the last inspection.

Staff have attended training on equal opportunities and resources have been extended, which include multi-cultural dolls, puppets expressing different emotions as well as a variety of dressing up clothes and books. Festivals and topics relating to other cultures are included in the planning.

Risk assessments are robust and carried out daily, weekly and each term. Clear records are kept and outings are thoroughly assessed before taking children out and about.

Snack time has been re-organised to cover a rolling snack time. This is a social occasion where staff members take time to sit and chat with children.

Staff have worked hard to develop their planning. Planning now involves weekly meetings where key workers discuss areas for development of their children, which is used in future planning. Reports on individual children are issued each term show

what the next steps are for children. Observations are used effectively to see what children can do and plan for the future.

Home communications books have been introduced so both staff and parents can comment on what the children are doing. Each term reports are issued and parents are invited to comment on a report slip. Parents evenings are held each term so that parents can view and discuss their children's progress. Regular questionnaires are sent to parents for their views and opinions, which staff act upon.

All staff are involved in monitoring each other to help highlight strengths and weaknesses. Any training needs highlighted can be addressed and in house training has been developed to aid areas of weakness within teaching. Assessments are used effectively so that key workers can clearly identify where children are at so that they can challenge and extend their learning. Key activity planners have started to show differentiation in activities to provide challenge for children or support the less able child.

### **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.

## **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):

- develop staff knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework so that it can be successfully used in practice including how they can record children's achievements
- ensure staff are deployed effectively when using both rooms.

#### **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 opportunities for children to freely select materials to express their ideas and experiment with different ways of joining.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)