



RAINBOW PLAYGROUP

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	508633
Inspection date	04 December 2006
Inspector	Bharti Vakil / Kim Mundy
Setting Address	Streatfield Road, Harrow, Middlesex, HA3 9BS
Telephone number	020-8907-7494 (EMEGENCY ONLY)
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Registered person	The Committee of Rainbow Playgroup
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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 satisfactory. 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 Playgroup is run by a committee. It opened in 1978 and operates from a hall within Kenton Baptist Church in a residential area of Kenton, in the London Borough of Harrow. A maximum of 25 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open from Monday to Friday, 09.30 to 12.00 during term time. There is access to an outdoor play area.

There are currently 13 children from two years to under five years on roll. Of these, one child receives funding for nursery education. Children come from the local and wider community.

The playgroup currently supports children who speak English as an additional language.

There are five staff who work with children. Three staff including the manager hold Foundation course certificate from Pre-school Playgroup Association.

The playgroup is a member of PSLA (Pre-school Learning Alliance). It receives support from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is promoted as the premises is maintained to a good standard of cleanliness. Children learn about healthy hygiene practice through the daily routine because staff encourage them to wash their hands before handling food and after using the toilet. Although, staff do not wipe down surfaces before serving snacks to children. Suitable equipment is available to help children to independently use the toilet facilities.

Children are protected from unnecessary illness as they do not attend when they are suffering from infections. Suitable procedures are in place for medication and dealing with accidents. Staff use gloves during nappy changes, which limits the possible spread of infection. Children are protected in emergencies because three staff hold current first aid certificates appropriate for childcare.

Children have opportunities to handle and taste different fruits and vegetables through planned activities. For example, preparing fruit salad and vegetable soup. Children are learning about healthy living as they enjoy fresh fruits, milk or water at snack time. However, the organisation of snack time does not create a sociable and relaxing atmosphere in which to promote social skills. Children are asked to sit on the cold floor whilst fruit is served to them. Children do not have opportunities to develop their independence at snack time as staff pour out drinks and hand out fruit.

Children laugh and have fun as they use the hula hoops in the large indoor space available for physical exercises. They are beginning to show an awareness of space as they move around each other. Staff encourage children to drink water following the physical exercise session. Children are developing their small muscle skills such as hand and eye coordination as they use a wide range of tools, for example, rolling pins, scissors and pencils. More able children have fewer opportunities to use tools and equipment to develop their large muscle skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming and warm environment. All furniture and play equipment has to be packed away at the end of each session, because the hall is used by others in the day. This means that children are not able to self-select a wider range of items from easily accessible storage units. However, the range of available activities and play resources are set out attractively for children, which encourages their interest.

Children move around freely in a spacious hall that is free from obvious safety hazards. Staff are well deployed supervising and interacting with children. They follow good security precautions relating to children's arrival and departure. However, not all risks in all areas used

by children have been minimised. The heaters in the entrance hall, the cloakroom and the bathroom are hot to touch and easily accessible to children. Children are practising regular emergency evacuations and staff are clearly aware of the suitable procedures. This promotes an awareness amongst children of evacuating safely should the need arise. Although, the written fire log was not available for inspection.

The grassed area in the car park is used occasionally for outside play. This area is not secure. Although the manger states the risk assessments have been carried out and children are closely supervised at all times. Risk assessments were not made available for inspection.

Children are safeguarded because staff have suitable knowledge and understanding regarding child protection issues and the possible signs of abuse or neglect. They know the procedures they must follow should they have a concern about a child, and the necessary documentation is in place to support their practice.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are generally engaged throughout their time within the setting, they happily play with each other and are beginning to learn to share and take turns. Children are comfortable and confident in the playgroup environment, they settle quickly once dropped off by parents.

Overall, young children are participating in activities which are appropriate for their age and stage of development. They are helped to make sense of what they see, hear and touch. For example, play dough, musical instruments, glue and paint. One child says to her peer 'dough soft, soft', mimicking the staff. Some children and a staff member sing spontaneously as they play with sand. Children are making early marks as they use pencils, crayons and paints. They particularly enjoy playing in the well-equipped role play area, which encourages children to act out their experiences from home. They are interested in building and constructing with materials such as mega blocks and train tracks. However, staff often disrupt children's play. For example, a child happily involved in a threading activity is asked by staff to complete sponge painting before she clears the activity away.

Staff have recently obtained knowledge of the Birth to three matters framework and they are just beginning to implement this. Although, this requires further development to fully support younger children's learning and development.

Nursery Education

The quality and teaching and learning is satisfactory and children are making steady progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have a basic understanding of the Foundation Stage and overall, provide a well-balanced curriculum. They are keen to improve the provision for early education. Staff use some positive teaching methods such as demonstrating new tasks which help children to achieve. Planning, evaluation and assessment systems are not fully developed to support children's progress and learning effectively. Staff are able to verbally demonstrate an understanding of how to challenge more able children. However, staff do not effectively use their observation records to inform the next steps in children's learning.

Children are happy, interested to learn and become involved in activities. They are developing their ability to concentrate and share during group activity time. Children have some opportunities to develop their independence skills, for example when selecting activities as they arrive. Children understand that print carries meaning through using name labels and by pointing them out in the environment. They practise their pre-writing skills when using lists and notebooks in the home corner. Children can easily access a range of books to stimulate their interest in early reading. Although, staff use limited open ended questioning to extend children's thinking and to widen their vocabulary.

Children are able to problem solve for themselves, for example when trying to fit puzzles. They are able to sort and match a variety of objects into colour and size groups. Children are learning to count and understand numbers through practical experiences. They have opportunities to weigh and make patterns. Although, more able children have less opportunities to extend their learning in practical activities as staff miss opportunities to extend children's learning.

Children have opportunities to learn about the world they live in. Planned activities and visitors to the setting offer children experiences to learn about different cultures, people in the community and their roles. Children use tools and techniques appropriately to build and construct. They do not have enough opportunities to examine living things, to investigate or find out how things work such as radios, clocks and magnifying glasses.

Children enjoy good quality imaginative play, for example, in the doctor's surgery taking phone calls and writing prescriptions. They have good opportunities to explore colour, shape, texture and form in two and three dimensions. They sing songs from memory. However further opportunities are required to explore music, movement and dance.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's behaviour is generally good. They are beginning to learn how to behave appropriately through the staff's praise and encouragement. The behaviour policy promotes positive behaviour and overall, staff have suitable understanding of different behaviour strategies to use according to children's age and level of understanding.

Children are valued and their individual needs are respected. For example, a child was encouraged to use the bed in the home corner as he said he was tired. Children from different backgrounds are welcomed into the setting. Many children speak English as an additional language and staff have suitable methods of settling these children into the playgroup. All staff are able to speak several languages. Staff are kind to children which makes them feel secure. Planned activities help children to learn about different celebrations. Children are provided with resources that reflect positive images of diversity. This helps them to develop an understanding of other cultures and faiths within society.

None of the children currently attending have learning difficulties or disabilities. A suitable special needs policy is in place. There is a special needs co-coordinator for the setting who has attended relevant training.

There are appropriate systems in place to share information with parents and carers, which contributes to children's well-being. Generally, children settle well because staff find out some basic words in the child's first language. Information about the playgroup's policies and procedures are readily available at each session. A half term newsletter informs parents of the themes for each week, for example transport, autumn and list of rhymes and songs that their children will be learning in the playgroup. Staff share daily verbal information with parents about children's care and activities. Partnership with parents and carers in relation to nursery education is satisfactory. Adequate information is given to parents about the Foundation Stage curriculum and the six areas of learning. Parents are given regular feedback on children's progress.

This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

There are appropriate recruitment procedures in place to ensure staff are suitable to work with children and therefore children's welfare is safeguarded. Although, the manager's qualification is not equivalent to level 3, appropriate to the post. Staff are deployed appropriately to supervise and work directly with children. Children benefit from combined knowledge of the staff team as they develop their skills and knowledge by attending various short courses. For example, story telling, behaviour management, Birth to three matters framework. The established staff team works well together, which ensures children are generally, happily engaged in meaningful activities.

The premises are suitably organised for children to play and rest comfortably. Overall, steps have been taken to keep children safe in the play room although not all risks have been minimised in all areas used by the children. Most of the required documentation which is necessary for children's health, safety and well-being is in place. However, the records of risk assessments and emergency evacuations were not available for the inspection.

Leadership and management of the playgroup is satisfactory. The manager has attended Foundation Stage training to gain knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals. She works closely with the staff team to implement these and is currently devising plans to develop their work for the benefit of the children. There is no formal system to monitor quality of teaching although, it is monitored through observations and verbal discussions. There are some effective communication systems in place such as daily discussions, staff and planning meetings.

The setting meets the need of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the setting was required to develop the child protection statement to include the procedure to be followed when an allegation is made against a member of staff; develop (staff's) knowledge and understanding of child protection issues through attendance on relevant training courses; maintain a daily record of attendance for staff and children showing

times of arrival and departure; and ensure records regarding the suitability of staff are held securely on the premises and are accessible for inspection. The setting has now addressed all the recommendations. This safeguards children care and welfare.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order 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

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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):

- make suitable arrangements at snack times and ensure children are able to access refreshments independently
- ensure that children can safely play outside and minimise hazards indoors
- continue to develop planning for Birth to three matters framework and implement this effectively
- ensure the manager obtains an appropriate early years qualification and provide an action plan stating when and how this will be achieved
- ensure all records are available for inspection including risk assessments and fire drills.

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):

- continue to develop staff's knowledge and understanding of Foundation Stage of learning
- continue to develop planning, assessment and evaluation procedures

- introduce a formal system to monitor the quality of teaching and to identify future training needs (also applies to care).

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