



Riverston Independent day school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY301710
Inspection date	24 November 2006
Inspector	Jeannette Waring
Setting Address	Riverston School, 63-69 Eltham Road, London, SE12 8UF
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Registered person	Riverston School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, 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.

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?

Riverston School is an independent day school providing education for children from the age of three to 16 years and day care for children from one to three years. The school is situated close to Lee town centre and has been registered since July 2005. The nursery unit provides care for a maximum of 45 children aged one to three years. The pre-school unit provides care and education for a maximum of 40 children aged three to four years. The out of school club provides care for a maximum of 26 children aged five to eight years. Both the nursery and the pre-school operate from self-contained units within the main school building and each has a designated outdoor play area. The out of school club currently operates in one of the school halls and in fine weather children have use of an outdoor play area. There are currently 43 children on roll in the nursery, some of whom attend on a part-time basis, 26 children are on roll in the pre-school all of whom receive funding for nursery education and 20 children are on

roll in the out of school club. At present there are no children attending who have disabilities or learning difficulties or who speak English as an additional language.

A total of 25 staff work directly with the children, most work solely within one of the units but a small number work across the units. Currently, 22 members of staff hold an appropriate childcare qualification and two are attending training to obtain a qualification.

The nursery and pre-school units are open from 08:00 until 18:00 for 50 weeks of the year, the out of school club provides care from 15:15 until 18:00 during term time and also offers care from 08:00 until 18:00 during some school holidays.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is well promoted and protected by the good accident and medication procedures that are in place. Children are cared for in a bright and clean environment. They are beginning to learn about the importance of good hygiene as they are routinely encouraged to wash their hands before meals and after using the toilet. For example, in pre-school one four year old reminded another child to wash their hands before they helped themselves at the snack bar "in case there are germs on your hands".

The procedures in place to protect children from the risk of cross-infection across all three units are generally good and children's toilet and washing facilities are good. However, in the nursery unit hygiene routines are not always rigorous enough. For example, the storage of some children's toothbrushes poses a risk of cross-infection.

Children have good opportunities for physical play. Both the nursery and the pre-school have their own designated outdoor play area and children attending the out of school club have access to the playground during the light evenings and take part in a range of organised games in the hall during the winter. Staff in the nursery unit ensure that children have almost daily access to fresh air and outdoor exercise. In the pre-school there is free-flow between the indoor and outdoor environments for most of the day providing children with excellent opportunities for spontaneous vigorous exercise which they take part in with enthusiasm. In addition, staff plan the outdoor activities carefully in order to encourage children's all round physical development.

All children benefit from the healthy and nutritious meals provided by the school cook. A monthly menu plan details a range of interesting and healthy meals for the children to choose from. All meals are prepared on the premises from fresh ingredients and children have several portions of fresh fruit and vegetables every day. Nora Sands from the Jamie Oliver TV programme visited the school during the inspection to compliment the cook on the healthy meals she provides for the children.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe, secure, warm and welcoming setting where staff ensure that children are well supervised both indoors and in the outdoor play areas. This setting gives a high priority to children's security and the recently installed CCTV cameras together with an entry-phone system allows staff to view all visitors before allowing access. The CCTV also enhances children's safety within the setting as head of the junior school is able to view areas of the nursery and pre-school from her office.

The nursery rooms are well organised with bright displays of children's art work on the walls. The baby room provides the youngest children with a cosy space where they can safely explore and play. Older children benefit from being able to move between rooms independently because staff have ensured, through their risk assessments, that all areas are safe, secure and free from hazards. The pre-school unit, which has recently been refurbished, provides children with an excellent environment in which to play and learn. All children have access to a good range of good quality toys, equipment and resources which promote their development and learning. Toys are maintained in a clean and safe condition and most are freely accessible to children. In the nursery many of the toys are stored where children can access them for themselves. In the pre-school resources are located where children can access them freely and in safety, this promotes their independence and helps them to gain confidence as they select resources, tidy away after themselves and help staff to set up activities. Children attending the out of school club can select activities from the range provided and know that they can ask for other activities if they want them.

Risk assessments in all areas of the school are routinely carried out by school maintenance staff and staff within each unit carry out daily safety checks in order to keep children safe. In addition, all outings are fully risk assessed and staff talk to children about how to stay safe when out in the community. For example, they learn how to cross roads in safety and this is carried through into their play activities as children act out the school crossing patrol on the roadway in the pre-school playground.

All staff demonstrate an awareness of their role in protecting children from harm or neglect and some staff have recently accessed the new Safeguarding Children course provided by the local authority. However, the child protection procedure has not been updated to ensure compliance with the changes introduced by the Local Safeguarding Children Boards.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children are happy, settled and secure because staff are kind and caring and demonstrate a good understanding of their individual care needs.

Children in the nursery are happy and supported in their play and they enjoy the warm and appropriately affectionate care offered by the staff team. Staff have attended some training on the Birth to three matters framework and are using this to plan activities which promote children's all round development. Staff encourage children to explore activities, and examples

of children's art work, which are attractively displayed in the nursery rooms, show that children are free to use a range of art and craft materials to express their own ideas. Children are encouraged to rest after lunch and babies are able to sleep whenever they are tired. Children enjoy coming together for meals in the new nursery dining room and staff are currently experimenting with the best way to organise seating in order to ensure that meals are happy social events for the children.

In the pre-school, children are happy, confident, well behaved and developing independence. Staff have worked hard since the refurbishment of the pre-school to provide children with an open, bright and stimulating unit where they have free access to a range of interesting resources. Children thrive in this setting and enjoy taking ownership of their environment. They know where to find the resources they need, for example, children have the freedom to explore the art and craft materials and to plan their own work. They also enjoy helping staff to set up and clear away planned activities and confidently support each other at more complex tasks, such as using the computer.

In the out of school club, children are relaxed and enjoy the freedom of their leisure time after a day in the classroom. They enjoy sitting together in the canteen at teatime, talking with their friends and with staff. Children said that they enjoy coming to the club to meet their friends and to play with the activities. Older children particularly enjoy the table football, pinball machine and games, such as twister. While the younger children enjoy make believe play and dressing up in the role play area, activities, such as sewing, are also popular. The staff team are relaxed and friendly with the children allowing them the freedom to dip in and out of activities as they choose. Although staff allow children freedom and encourage them to play together with friends, they also encourage children to behave well, they remind children of what is expected of them and encourage them to be polite and well mannered.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The pre-school suite provides children who receive funding for nursery education with an accessible and stimulating environment. Children are happy and motivated to learn and they take part in the range of activities provided with enthusiasm and obvious enjoyment. Space is well organised both indoors and outdoors and children benefit from being able to access the outdoor play space freely throughout most of the day. A new planning and assessment system has recently been introduced. It enables staff to identify children's interests and build on these, drawing children into areas of play and learning that they would otherwise not choose to access. The pre-school's new layout together with children's free access to resources, their free access to outdoor play and the new planning and assessment system has had a very positive impact on the outcomes for children. However, staff have yet to put in place a formal system to monitor practice and evaluate the play programme in order to ensure that the new systems are working well for all children.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is particularly well supported. Children are very confident. They are able to make independent choices about which activity they wish to access, to select resources for themselves and to choose between indoor and outdoor play space. They take a pride in their work which they can display for themselves on the wall. Behaviour is very good because staff have high but realistic expectations of children and set

clear boundaries which children know and understand. Children show care and concern for each other and often help friends at activities. Children are comfortable with themselves, have a positive self-image and good self-esteem.

Staff support children's language development well and many children confidently initiate conversations with adults. Children enjoy listening to stories and take part in singing time with great enthusiasm. For example, children enjoyed practising The Twelve Days of Christmas for the Christmas concert. Children have good opportunities to practise their early writing skills in the graphics area and in a variety of play activities throughout the setting. Children are learning about numbers and to count and older children are beginning to make simple calculations. For example, during a story a child pointed out there were two cows on one page and two horses on the other and that made four all together. They also have many opportunities to set, sort, match and grade using a wide range of equipment and using computer programmes.

The good organisation of the play space and the accessibility of toys and resources encourages children to explore and experiment for themselves. This widens their understanding of the world around them. Children show curiosity and wonder as they discover things through their own efforts. For example, a child who had selected red paint for herself then borrowed some blue from another child and exclaimed in delight "Oh look I've made purple". They use everyday technology with confidence, selecting and changing discs in the computer and setting up the programmes they want to use. Many older children help the younger ones with simple exercises and confidently explain how to use the mouse.

Free access to the outdoor play area ensures that children have excellent opportunities for vigorous exercise each day. They enjoy using the wheeled toys and are developing a good control and an awareness of space as they negotiate obstacles and drive one way round the marked roadway. Staff plan a range of activities which encourage children to run, jump, hop and to gain control of their bodies. However, currently there are no opportunities for children to use large equipment to climb and to balance. Children are able to explore their own creativity and to express themselves as they confidently select materials and set up their own activities. For example, a child came to the craft area and, after sorting through the recycled materials, selected a plastic bottle. She chose a bottle of paint and poured a small amount into a pot, selected the brush she wanted and began to paint her bottle. She then selected some beans and put them into her bottle, after shaking it a little she cut a paper circle and stuck it on her bottle as a lid. She continued to decorate her shaker with paint and glitter, smiling and humming to herself throughout. Children also enjoy imaginary play in the role play area and enthusiastically use musical instruments in spontaneous singing times.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Because staff demonstrate a good awareness of children's individual needs and family background children thrive. They develop a positive self-image and good self-esteem. Children learn about their own culture and beliefs and are beginning to learn about elements of other traditions. Children learn to value and respect difference from the staff team who reflect the wider community and provide children with positive role models. A special educational needs co-ordinator is in post to support children with disabilities or learning difficulties in all units.

Children's behaviour is very good. Staff use positive behaviour management techniques to encourage children to behave well and ensure that all children have access to an interesting range of activities so that they do not become bored and restless. Older children have a clear sense of right and wrong and are learning to become self-disciplined. Children are polite and courteous to each other and to staff who treat children with courtesy and respect.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. As well as learning right from wrong children are developing caring attitudes towards each other and even young children offer help to others within the group.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. All parents interviewed during the inspection were happy with the care their children receive, they commented on how approachable the staff in all units are, how happy their children are and how well pre-school children are learning. All parents are given information about the nursery and pre-school when their child joins the setting. This includes some information on the Birth to three matters framework and the Foundation Stage. However, most children join the setting in the nursery and then transfer to the pre-school and parents are only given a verbal introduction to the pre-school. This means that many parents are unaware of how the Foundation Stage is taught in the pre-school or how they could build on this at home. Parents know that they can talk to staff at any reasonable time and are aware that they will have the opportunity to discuss children's progress at a parents' evening. However, they are not currently given good information on the areas of learning and they do not have an opportunity to contribute to children's progress records.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Suitable systems are in place to protect children. All required checks are carried out on staff and new staff are closely supervised. A new system of staff appraisal has been introduced in order to ensure staff's on-going suitability. The recently installed CCTV system enables the head of the junior school to monitor activities in the nursery and pre-school which further protects children. The school actively encourages all staff to access training and to up-date their qualifications. Currently, a total of six members of staff are studying for a higher qualification, two at degree level and one at NVQ level 4. This ensures that children benefit from being cared for by a well qualified staff team. Good staff rotas ensure that staffing ratios are met at all times. Staff have made good use of space in all units and the pre-school in particular has provided a very stimulating and accessible environment for children.

All documentation sampled was clear, well maintained and where appropriate routinely shared with parents. Children's individual records are held in their own files in a locked cabinet within the units. Each unit has a set of similar policies and procedures which staff can refer to. However, some of these are out of date and do not accurately reflect practice within the nursery.

Leadership and management is good. There is a clear management structure in place and the head of the junior school has a clear vision and focus for all the registered units within the school. She works closely with the enthusiastic and motivated staff team and together they have put in place a number of new initiatives which have had a significant positive impact on

the quality of care and learning for the pre-school children. These include the new layout of the pre-school, children's free access to resources and to the outdoor area and the new planning and assessment system. In addition, the new appraisal and supervision system and the positive support for staff's personal development and training help to ensure that children benefit from being cared for by an informed, motivated and supported staff team.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration one complaint has been made to Ofsted which required the provider to take action to meet the National Standards. The complaint related to Standard 6: Safety. Concerns were raised that children were not adequately supervised at all times. An unannounced visit was made by an Ofsted inspector and a number of actions were set. The actions were: to ensure that children were appropriately supervised at all times; to ensure that a record of staff caring for children was maintained and to carry out risk assessments to ensure that children were safe. The provider took immediate steps to ensure children were closely supervised at all times, carried out a thorough risk assessment of the premises in order to keep children safe and ensured that a record of staff caring for children each day was put in place. Ofsted was satisfied with the action taken by the provider and the provider remained qualified for registration at the time the investigations were closed.

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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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):

- review hygiene routines in the nursery in order to ensure that children are protected from the risk of cross infection
- make sure that child protection procedures comply with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures

- develop the partnership with parents so that they are able to be involved in their children's learning and contribute to their children's progress records
- complete the review of policies and procedures in order to ensure that they give up to date information and reflect current practise

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 a system to review practice and evaluate the programme of activities and the use of resources in order to ensure that all children access a broad and balanced play programme

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