

Rocking Horse

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	312312
Inspection date	08 November 2006
Inspector	Shirley Leigh Monks-Meagher
Setting Address	30 Manchester Road, Audenshaw, Manchester, Lancashire, M34 5GB
Telephone number	0161 371 7847
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Registered person	Rocking Horse Nursery Ltd
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 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?

Rocking Horse Nursery has been registered for eleven years and is housed in a four storey building situated in the Audenshaw area of Tameside, close to the M60 motorway. There are three play rooms on the ground floor and two play rooms on the first floor. The staff room, kitchens and laundry are situated in the basement and offices are situated on the top floor. A secure outdoor area is available for outside play. Children are grouped according to their age or stage of development.

The nursery currently has 62 children on roll including seven who are in receipt of the nursery educational grant. They support children with English as an additional language. Opening hours are 07.45 to 18.00, Monday to Friday, all year round with the exception of Christmas and statutory holidays.

The manager is appropriately qualified and has overall responsibility for the day to day running of the nursery. She leads a team of 16 staff, 14 work directly with the children and 10 hold relevant early years qualifications with the remainder working towards them. The nursery is supported by mentors from Sure Start and are members of the National Day Nursery Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a healthy environment because staff follow good hygiene routines. For example, they store children's dummies in individual named pots, ensure children have their own bedding and, that they sleep head to toe. Staff use disposable aprons and gloves when changing nappies or when handling food and act as good role models regarding washing their hands at appropriate times. Children are developing good personal hygiene. Older children flush toilets and wash their hands independently.

Children are treated appropriately for minor accidents because staff are first aid trained. However, the first aid boxes contain inappropriate items, such as alcohol wipes and sachets of Calpol, putting children's well-being at risk. Parental consents are sought for medication and records are kept of medicine administered but these are inconsistent, therefore posing a risk to children's welfare. An effective sick child and exclusion policy protects children from illness. All children benefit from routines that include both vigorous play and times for rest or sleep and babies follow their individual natural patterns for sleeping and eating.

Children benefit from daily outdoor activities; they run and play in the fresh air, which contributes to their good health. Children competently use outdoor play equipment, such as climbing and balancing apparatus and wheeled vehicles. They develop strength, co-ordination and spatial awareness. For example, they move the bikes using pedals, scoot scooters along with one leg and weave their vehicles in and around objects and people. Babies are encouraged to develop physical skills; staff ensure there is plenty of space for them to crawl and explore the environment and suitable equipment, such as walkers, baby gyms and domestic style furniture, help them to pull-up and practise walking.

Children's health is fostered through a varied choice of healthy snacks and meals. Children's individual dietary needs are met because staff work with parents. Children are encouraged to feed themselves independently using appropriate cutlery and crockery. However, staff do not sit with the children at the tables but spend their time in routine chores such as setting out beds or serving up food and are not always supportive enough to the young children to ensure they are managing to eat sufficient food. Older children are invited to the serving table one at a time to make their selection. Whilst this encourages their decision making skills children spend lengthy periods of time waiting for food and some children are finished before others have even begun. Children are encouraged to drink milk or water with their snacks and meals however, some of the children cannot easily access drinking water at other times. This means children cannot refresh themselves if thirsty.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children feel welcome in a warm, ventilated and well lit environment where sufficient equipment and furniture is of suitable quality and appropriate size. Most rooms are organised effectively into play areas although the organisation of resources is not as effective. For example, additional role play equipment, such as crockery, play food, hats and bags are stored on high shelves in the role play area whilst videos and small world equipment are stored on the lower shelves. This inhibits children from extending their ideas and developing their own play.

Children have ample space to play in comfort and can generally move around safely and freely. Good attention is given to procedures for using the stairs. These include holding hand rails, single file and strategically placed staff. As a result children are able to use stairs safely and competently. Risk assessments are undertaken frequently by staff and issues are reported although these are not consistently followed up. A broken toilet roll holder, radiator grill cover, trailing ivy and electrical wires are some of the outstanding hazards which pose a risk to children. The door to the basement is accessible to children and is a risk to their safety and well-being. Secure entry systems protect children from unwanted visitors and ensure children only leave the setting with the appropriate person.

Children's welfare is fully safeguarded because staff clearly understand their roles and responsibilities relating to keeping children safe from harm and neglect. They are clear that their first responsibility lies with the child and are confident about the procedures to follow and who to contact in the event of a concern. Staff are aware of the procedures and the implications should an allegation be made against them, because they have all attended recent training. A policy statement is shared with parents, however this is incomplete as it does not include the procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation against a member of staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Overall, there is a satisfactory range and balance of activities to promote the children's learning. Children are well settled and secure in their environment. Good settling in procedures ensure a smooth transition between home and the nursery. A well established key worker system means children benefit from consistent staff members and develop healthy relationships with key people. Staff have a generally good understanding of the 'Birth to three matters framework and plan activities linked directly to it. Staff have introduced a new system to record their observations and assessment of children under three years which includes a section for planning the 'next steps' although this is still in its infancy and some staff still lack confidence in their knowledge. As a result, planning is not based on what children already know and can do, which hinders their progress.

Children under three years respond well to activities that appeal to their senses. For example, great fun is had with paint as they discover its colours and arms, faces and hands as well as paper, that cornflour turns their hair and eyebrows white and they can jiggle their bodies up and down in time to music. Children are adequately supported by staff who play with them at their level. Babies investigate textures. They handle the items of the treasure basket and are captivated by the large textured activity cube. They have ample space to crawl and appropriate equipment to encourage them to pull up and try a few steps. Babies develop good physical skills. Toddlers are learning to make sense of the world around them in role play activities, such as the hairdressers.

Babies and toddlers are finding their voice, learning about early speech patterns and developing a vocabulary because staff talk to them. Staff model conversation by responding to baby babble and children babble to each other when playing. Staff listen to children and respond appropriately. Language is generally well supported.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage, which they use as a basis for planning. Planning covers

all the required areas although not all the aspects of learning are sufficiently included and it does not address the next steps of learning for children. Consequently, there are some gaps in children's learning and activities do not always challenge children appropriately. For example, at story time the choice of story over challenged the less able children in the group who became restless and disruptive inhibiting the enjoyment of the story for the more able children. The learning area is organised into curriculum areas, however, the organisation of the routines and resources are less effective. Routines, such as outdoor play, snack and lunch times result in children spending lengthy periods of time in a line or waiting for something to eat. This curtails the time they have for learning and play. Resources, in many instances are ineffectively organised resulting in children being unable to access resources because they are on the higher shelves which inhibits their initiative and opportunities to extend their own play.

Staff generally interact positively with children although routine jobs sometimes overshadow the time spent encouraging and supporting children.

Children are confident, speak clearly and can express their needs clearly. For example, children ask for resources, additional drinks and help with items, such as zips. They ask who visitors are and introduce themselves. They enjoy stories, looking at books and mark making activities, such as painting and drawing. More able children make good attempts at writing their names freehand, and use both upper and lower case letters. However, children have too few opportunities to use mark-making in meaningful situations to help them understand writing for different purposes. Children are beginning to link some significant letter shapes to their sounds. For example, the initial letter of their name. Children develop an understanding of numbers. They count reliably and use fingers and items to tally against. More able children can recognise when there are 'more' in a group and some significant numbers, such as three or four. Children use their knowledge to solve simple problems, such as how many spoonfuls they will need when baking or how many cups they need for each table. Practical activities, such as sand and water are helping children develop an early understanding of volume and capacity.

Children have some opportunities to explore and investigate. They explore change through baking activities, the seasons of the year and the weather. They have planted beans like 'Jack and the beanstalk' nurtured them and watched them grow. They learn how to care for living creatures because they assist staff in feeding and cleaning out the cages of the class hamsters. Children learn about constructing. They build tracks for their cars and trains, make models from commercial kits and fold paper and card to make lanterns and fireworks to celebrate Diwali and Firework Night. Children are developing a perspective on time. They are able to recall past events and discuss the future but have less understanding of the local environment. Children have limited opportunities to develop their understanding of simple everyday technology. Children explore textures, colours, shapes and sounds; they print, paint and collage using scraps of fabric and tissue. They have a repertoire of simple rhymes and songs and move rhythmically to music. However, they have too few opportunities to express their own ideas and creativity because staff place too much emphasis on finished articles. For example, they provide pre-drawn pictures and work sheets.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are welcomed into the setting and cared for by staff who recognise them as individuals. Children settle into the nursery because appropriate procedures are in place. Children are able to freely choose where they will play and can select some resources. All children play a full part in the nursery. Children develop self-help skills. For example, many are able to put

on their shoes and coats and hats to play outdoors. More able children willingly help others to fasten poppers on coats or the buckles on their shoes. Children are developing positive attitudes towards others; they celebrate a variety of festivals and traditions, such as Diwali and Firework Night and engage in activities which help them recognise similarities and differences in a positive manner.

Overall, children behave well. Mostly, children are motivated and purposefully engaged. Their efforts and achievements are appropriately praised and encouraged by staff increasing their confidence in their abilities and developing strong self-esteem. Children are polite and show concern for others. For example, older children help younger children to wipe their nose and to understand why sweeping the toys off the table is not nice. Generally children play together harmoniously, are beginning to share resources and take turns fairly. Overall, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is satisfactory. Staff share information about activities and events both verbally and in writing. They display the planning for parents to see, encourage them to look in their children's files and attend regular parents evenings to discuss their child's progress. A limited amount of information is displayed to help parents develop their own knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and help them to be involved in their child's learning. Similarly, parents of children under three are provided with information about the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Policies and procedures are shared with parents including information on how to make a complaint. Parents positively endorse the care and education their children receive at the setting and describe it as "giving them a good grounding".

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's welfare is fully safeguarded because robust procedures ensure children are cared for by a suitably vetted, qualified and experienced staff team who undertake regular training for their professional development.

Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and generally work well together to promote the effective operation of the establishment, however this sometimes impinges on the support available for the children. The staffing ratio supports positive outcomes for children. Space is well organised, staff are generally well deployed but not all resources and routines are effectively organised to promote children's enjoyment and achievements, and encourage their initiative.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. The manager and staff work together to ensure children are provided with satisfactory care and education in a generally positive and supportive environment. Systems and routines are in place although these are not systematically approached by staff or effectively monitored and evaluated by management. For examples, there are some gaps in the curriculum, resources are poorly organised, planning does not address individual learning needs and some routines inhibit children's time for learning and play. A strong commitment to improvement and their approach to professional development contributes towards maintaining and improving the quality of care and education for all children who attend.

All legally required documentation and records to promote the welfare and well-being of children is in place and well organised, however, staff are inconsistent in maintaining them

accurately. This poses a risk to children. 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 nursery agreed to develop play opportunities and resources for younger children, encourage independence, confidence and develop children's self-esteem and ensure toys and books promote all aspects of equal opportunities.

Staff have all attended training relating to the 'Birth to three matters' framework and are using their knowledge and understanding to plan and provide appropriate activities and opportunities for children under three years. As a result, children are purposefully engaged in meaningful activities of their own choice. Staff have adapted routines in the nursery to encourage children to develop independence. For example, children are encouraged to feed themselves, select where they wish to play and attend to their own personal hygiene needs. Children's efforts and achievements are rewarded and celebrated. Staff praise children for kind actions, such as sharing or helping someone. Staff celebrate achievements such as taking a few steps or managing to keep dry. Consequently, children are confident in their abilities and behaviour and have a positive self-image. Resources relating to equality of opportunity have been increased. Children have opportunities to learn about race, culture, disability and gender through their play materials and activities and are widening their understanding of our diverse society.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 Ofsted have received one complaint;

Ofsted received concerns on 16 June 2005 in relation to National Standards 2, Organisation and 14, Documentation. The Complaints, Investigation and Enforcement Team contacted the provision. The provision provided an investigation response regarding the concerns raised. An action was raised and has been met in relation to National Standard 14. Ofsted are satisfied the provider remains qualified for registration.

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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The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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 first aid boxes contain only those items allowed and make fresh drinking water available to all children at all times
- ensure that hazards to children relating to the cellar door, ivy, trailing wires, laundry, toilet roll holders and radiator grill are minimised
- maintain consistency when completing records and documentation relating to children's safety, welfare and well-being; for example, medication, consents, written agreements, registers, visitors, complaints and risk assessments
- review policies relating to safeguarding children and behaviour management to fully meet the requirements of the National Standards

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):

- ensure planning meets children's individual learning needs and challenges them appropriately (this also applies to day care)
- organise resources to enable children to lead and develop their own play and ensure the routines of the day do not inhibit children's learning (this also applies to day care)
- implement effective systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of nursery education teaching and learning.

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