



## The Riverside Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Inspector</b>	Catherine Greenwood
<b>Setting Address</b>	York House Annexe, York House, Richmond Road, Twickenham, Middlesex, TW1 3AA
<b>Telephone number</b>	2087442459
<b>E-mail</b>	playriverside@btopenworld.com
<b>Registered person</b>	Juliette Mary Windsor
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](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 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?

The Riverside Playgroup opened in 1986 and was re-registered in 2005. It operates from a suite of rooms in an annex to York House in Twickenham, Middlesex. A maximum of 30 children may attend the playgroup at any one time and there are currently 36 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 12 receive funding for early education, three of whom are aged four years. Children attend a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disability. It also currently supports children who speak English as an additional language. The playgroup opens four days a week, Monday to Thursday, term time only. Sessions run from 09:00 to 11:45. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

The playgroup employs 11 members of staff including the manager and of these three hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification.

The setting receives support from the local Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children sit at tables in small groups for snack time and are provided with healthy food such as fresh fruit and toast. They help staff to fill the water dispenser at the beginning of each session and say water is their favourite drink. Children are protected from cross infection because they wash their hands independently before snack time and staff follow good hygiene practice when changing children's nappies. Several of the staff hold current first aid certificates which means there is always someone available on the premises or on outings to provide children with treatment in the event of an accident.

Children engage in a wide range of activities which help develop their physical skills, for example, they choose to make frequent use of the large indoor ball pool. Consequently, they show excellent control of their own movements and a good awareness of space and others, as they twirl and jump into the balls with excitement and land appropriately. In addition, children have regular access to the playgroup garden where they steer and manoeuvre the wheeled toys with skill. There is a very good range of outside play equipment which provides them with the opportunity to develop skills in climbing, sliding and crawling. Children develop good co-ordination, learn to march, and follow action songs during music and movement sessions which take place twice a week, and are facilitated by an additional member of staff. They join in these sessions with enthusiasm and show a good ability to respond to rhythm by means of gesture and movement. Children demonstrate increasing control in the use of 'small world activities' and when using wooden blocks on the table to build towers. They enjoy manipulating the play dough to make 'pretend cakes', and know how to use the tools such as the rolling pins and cutters to achieve their aims.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are kept safe because risk assessments are completed for the premises and visits to places such as farms. In addition, all necessary documents are requested from private coach companies to ensure children's safety whilst travelling. Many of the parents accompany children on outings, which means there is a very good ratio of adults to children. However, there is no written outings procedure in place. Staff supervise the children well when using the ball pool and slide and other areas of the premises such as the fully enclosed garden. The playgroup has good security precautions in place, such as an intercom system on the front gate. Children and staff take part in regular evacuation practices, which means they know what to do in the event of a fire. Staff check all rooms in the premises before they evacuate. However, during these practices the manager does not make use of the attendance register to call out children's names or complete a head count. This puts children's safety at risk. Children have access to an excellent range of safe, good quality, developmentally appropriate resources. These are well-organised

in child-height furniture to encourage independent access. Play equipment is regularly checked for safety and removed if broken.

The manager and deputy manager have a secure understanding of child protection, however, not all staff know what procedures to follow if they are worried a child is being abused. This means that children's welfare is not fully safeguarded.

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

The provision is good.

Children are enthusiastic about attending the playgroup and enjoy the company of other children and staff. They show great interest in using the very good range of resources. This is because staff make a wide range of play equipment easily accessible and help children to find additional resources they show interest in using. In addition, staff are skilled at knowing when to join in children's play, which means they are not always dependant upon adults' presence to contribute and participate. Consequently, children form very good relationships with each other and have very good personal independence and self confidence. Staff use a system for planning activities related to a wide range of interesting experiences such as sand and water play, painting, cooking, play dough, decorating CDs to hang on trees, leaf collecting, and gardening. All children have great opportunities to develop their senses, for example, as they plant vegetables in the garden flowerbeds, pour dry sand through their hands whilst sitting in floor level trays, and handle glitter whilst making firework rockets. In addition, children have the opportunity to take part in activities related to planned topics and are encouraged to bring in related items from home, such as photographs of their holidays. Children can choose to play inside or outside in the very large adjacent garden, because staff operate a free flow system for most of the morning. Photographs show evidence of children enjoying using the paddling pools during the Summer. Staff observe how children respond to the activities, adapt them according to the interest shown and introduce ideas that the children suggest. However, most staff do not have any knowledge and understanding of the Birth to three matters guidance, and therefore do not use the framework to review and enhance the good range of learning opportunities they are already providing for younger children.

### **NURSERY EDUCATION**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making progress in all areas of learning despite the fact that most staff do not have a secure understanding of the stepping stones within the Foundation Stage Curriculum and therefore do not know how to enhance learning for all children through appropriate questioning and conversation. For example, some younger children are making good progress in their knowledge of shape and number. However, assessment records do not show how this will be encouraged. Staff join children at the activities and ask children to think and talk about what they know, for example, when discussing words and numbers in other languages at snack time. Consequently, children show an interest in using other languages such as Spanish and French. Children are happy and interested in their environment, concentrate very well at their chosen activities and can play independently for long periods. They are extremely well behaved and co-operative, help each other, and are willing to share resources, such as the props for imaginative play. Children are eager to learn and

confident to ask staff for help when needed, for example, with making a caterpillar from dough, and pouring drinks at snack time.

Staff discuss their observations of each child's progress at the end of each term. They know how children are making progress in some areas of learning. However, this knowledge differs between members of staff. Planning includes a wide variety of activities and experiences for children, but does not include objectives for learning. The format for children's assessment records have been revised and include information related to the stepping stones. However, observations of children's progress are completed infrequently, do not cover all areas of learning and are not used to identify the next step for children's individual learning. Although staff have some knowledge of how children are making progress, they do not have sound systems in place to link children's individual learning to activity planning. This means that children are not sufficiently challenged or encouraged to reach their full potential in all areas.

Children make marks when using resources such as the blackboard and some older and more able children can write their name with letters correctly formed. However, planning does not identify how writing will be used for different purposes, and there is little use of print within the environment. Children hear and say the initial sound in words and know which letters represent some of the sounds. For example, when staff hold up name cards, most children can identify their name and the sound of the first letter. However, this learning is not extended or made more challenging for older and more able children. Children learn about the features of living things when they look at the frogs in the pond in the playgroup garden. This learning is extended, through visits to places such as Horton Park farm, where children can handle animals such as rabbits. Children learn where food comes from and how to plant and look after a wide selection of vegetables and plants in the nursery garden, for example, broad beans, lettuce, cabbage and butternut squash. They plant bulbs in pots which they put into a small greenhouse. In addition, children chop up, cook and taste the vegetables they have grown. Children explore their environment as they go on group outings within the local grounds, which include opportunities to learn about nature, through activities such as leaf collecting. However, planning does not identify objectives, for example, for children to talk about features of the environment they like and dislike. The setting has recently obtained a computer for the children to use, although this is not yet set up. There are too few programmable toys to support children's learning with operating simple equipment. Children show good self confidence, expression and enjoyment as they join in regular large group singing activities, where a member of staff plays the guitar. They are building a good repertoire of songs and can sing songs enthusiastically from memory. Staff extend learning in this area by encouraging children to match music to movement and the use of musical instruments. Children regularly engage in role play both inside the play group and in the garden. They make good use of the dressing up clothes, such as putting on policeman hats, and both boys and girls take an active part in pushing the toy buggies around the garden and pretend to 'go shopping'. Children show good self-confidence with initiating role play based on their first hand experiences. They really enjoy using the playhouses in the garden and often play alongside other children who are engaged in the same theme. Children handle and explore a wide range of media such as paint, sand, water, soil, dough. They enjoy using collage to make rockets and concentrate well whilst completing the activity. They paint freely at the easel which is made accessible each day. Creative activities

are well planned, although not all staff have a secure understanding of what they want children to learn from the activity.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are exceptionally well behaved because they are fully occupied at all times, staff provide a calm environment and are responsive to the children's individual needs. Children learn right from wrong because staff are committed to explaining to them about the consequences of their behaviour. Children are kind and helpful, for example, when younger children try to find equipment such as foam balls to use with rackets in the garden, other children spontaneously go and find the equipment for them. Children develop a strong sense of identity both individually and within the group because staff have a very caring approach towards the children and help them feel they belong. For example, when children are sitting on their own and not taking part in activities, staff quickly respond by sitting them on their lap and playing with the nearby resources themselves. As a result children quickly feel more secure and join in the activities with enthusiasm. Children develop a positive view of differences through using the range of accessible resources such as books, dressing up clothes and disabled figures. This learning is supported through planned activities, for example, in relation to the celebration of festivals such as Diwali. There are currently no children with learning difficulties and/or disability attending the playgroup. However, there is a SENCO worker who works closely with staff, children, parents and other agencies to meet children's individual needs. Previously, the playgroup has taken part in the assessment of children who need a full developmental and educational assessment. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parent questionnaires include very positive comments about the playgroup, such as lots for children to do, the experience and kindness and commitment of staff, fresh air every day, good play areas inside and outside and lots of information about activities. Parents often accompany staff and children on outings to places of interest such as farms and on local walks within the grounds. Parents are made very welcome within the setting and there is a friendly atmosphere when children are dropped off and collected. Staff communicate well with parents on a regular and informal level and share information about children's development. However, there are no formal opportunities for parents and staff to share children's assessment records and discuss and agree the next step for children's individual learning.

Parents receive a pack with comprehensive information about policies and procedures for the setting, as well as information about the Foundation Stage Curriculum. In addition, there is information displayed around the playgroup and details about the activities are made available on notice boards. However, parents are not provided with opportunities to help them learn more about the Curriculum.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

All children make their own independent choices from well organised accessible play resources. As a result, they enter the setting with enthusiasm, quickly find something to do and show interest in additional activities that have been set out prior to their arrival. The environment is well organised, stimulating and welcoming, and good use is made of the available space. Staff work together well as a team and are motivated and clear about their responsibilities, which means children are happy and settled. They provide a good range of interesting and well planned activities and topics for all children, and a range of experiences that are related to the guidance for Birth to three matters. However, planning is completed too far in advance to fully incorporate children's individual interests and does not include objectives for learning in relation to the Foundation Stage Curriculum.

Children benefit from a structured routine, which includes time for physical activity and snacks as well large group sessions. However, there is no keyworker system in place to enhance the individual support that children currently receive, or to help identify who is responsible for identifying the next step for children's individual learning. Staff have extensive childcare experience and many of them have worked at the playgroup on a long term basis. However, less than half the staff including the manager and the deputy manager have an appropriate early years qualification. Most procedures and record keeping systems are in place, but are not always updated or used effectively to promote children's safety and well-being, such as the fire evacuation procedures.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Children's welfare is safeguarded because the registered person ensures that staff are appropriately vetted. The manager has a clear ethos for the provision and clear expectations of staff practice and involvement. The manager and staff share information about training opportunities available, although these are mainly related to areas within care provision. There is no appraisal system in place to assess and improve the quality of teaching, including the identification of staff training needs. Consequently, some staff do not feel confident about attending training, and have therefore not had the opportunity to enhance their knowledge of the Foundation Stage Curriculum or Birth to three matters. This means the care and education for the children is not being continually improved. The manager works directly with the children as part of the staff team and provides a positive role model. Although team meetings are only held at the beginning of each term, good communication between staff and the manager help them to meet children's individual needs and ensure they make developmental progress. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection, the provider agreed to conduct a risk assessment of the premises, develop staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection issues, ensure accident and medication records are complete, ensure children do not have access to the kitchen or office, and devise a system for registering staff attendance and recording visitors to the group. A written risk assessment has been completed, accident and medication records include all necessary details, the kitchen and office have lockable doors so that children cannot access

these areas, and there are daily records of staff attendance and a book available for visitors to sign. Therefore documentation and most areas of children's safety have been improved. However, although the manager and deputy manager have a secure understanding of child protection, not all staff know what procedures to follow if they are worried a child is being abused. This means that children's welfare is not fully safeguarded.

At the last education inspection the provider agreed to revise the recording procedures to reflect the Early Learning Goals and stepping stones and review the organisation of story time to provide for children's different interest levels. Children have the opportunity to listen to stories when they are in a large group and staff are skilled at presenting stories in a way that captures all children's interest. In addition, children often spontaneously ask staff to read to them individually throughout the session. As a result, children show good interest in books. The format for children's assessment records have been revised to include all areas of learning, and general information related to the stepping stones. However, these are not completed on a regular basis or used to identify the next step for children's learning.

### **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**

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 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):

- improve staff knowledge and understanding of child protection procedures and make use of the children's attendance register during fire drills to ensure their safety
- ensure all staff develop a secure knowledge and understanding of the Birth to three matters guidance
- devise an action plan which identifies how at least half of all childcare staff including the manager and the deputy will obtain suitable Early Years qualifications



- devise procedures for outings and uncollected children and ensure the complaints procedure is updated with Ofsted's details.
- devise a system to monitor and record staff performance including the identification of future training needs.

### **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 all staff's understanding of the stepping stones within the Foundation Stage Curriculum and ensure they use this knowledge to extend learning for all children
- improve planning and observation and assessment of children's progress to ensure they cover all areas of learning and identifies objectives that help older and more able children to reach their full potential
- provide regular formal opportunities for parents and staff to share children's assessment records and discuss and agree the next step for children's individual learning

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