



Rainbows End Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	110075
Inspection date	01 December 2006
Inspector	Penny Wood
Setting Address	Sir John Moore Barracks, Andover Road, Winchester, Hampshire, SO22 6NQ
Telephone number	U/A
E-mail	
Registered person	Rainbows End Playgroup
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?

Rainbows End Playgroup is a committee run setting which opened in 1983. It operates from the Sir John Moore Barracks in Winchester and serves the local community. The playgroup is situated in purpose built accommodation and children enjoy the use of a secure outside play area.

A maximum of 18 children may attend at any one time and there are currently 22 children from two to five years on roll. This includes nine children funded for early education. The group operates five days a week during school term time only, between the hours of 09:00 and 15:00. Children may attend for a variety of sessions. The group have systems in place to support children who have learning difficulties and those who speak English as an additional language.

Three members of staff work with the children, all of which have an appropriate childcare qualification. The setting receives support from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children and staff practise appropriate hygiene routines throughout the day, which reduce the spread of germs and infections. For example, children know to wash their hands prior to eating, with staff reminding children when necessary, to wash them after visiting the toilet. Steps within the toilet area enable children to be independent within their hygiene routines. Staff ensure the equipment remains clean, with systems in place to regularly disinfect surfaces and to clean the toys.

When children fall ill whilst at playgroup, appropriate measures in place ensure children receive comfort and reassurance until their parents arrive. Systems to exclude children when ill reduce the spread of contagious illnesses, such as sickness and diarrhoea. When required, children receive medication in-line with their parent's wishes and individual needs. However, records that detail medication administered by staff are not shared with parents at home time, particularly the time the last dose was administered, which puts the child at risk of receiving further medication too soon.

In the event of accidents, children receive appropriate medical care from staff that are trained in first aid. Parental consent for seeking further medical advice or treatment ensures the staff are able to seek further professional medical attention in-line with parent's wishes.

Children enjoy access to a well-resourced outside play area, which enables them to enjoy physical exercise and to develop their mobility skills. During the summer months, strategic use of a gazebo protects the children from the harmful effects of the sun. The provision of wellington boots enable children to enjoy the outside area in all seasons, with areas of hard standing to encourage children to learn how to peddle their tricycles and to push themselves along in the cars.

Children have access to drinks throughout the day to ensure they do not become dehydrated. At snack time they enjoy a choice of milk, juice or water and a healthy snack of fruit, accompanied by a variety of cereals. Packed lunches are stored appropriately to ensure they remain fresh. Staff advise parents to provide healthy foods within children's lunchboxes and encourage the children to eat the healthy options first, saving the treats until last. Records of children's allergies ensure children only access foods that are suitable for children's individual dietary needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enter an environment that is bright and welcoming where safety measures in place reduce the risk of harm to children. For example, stair gates deny children entry into hazardous

areas such as the kitchen. Daily risk assessments ensure staff identify hazards that may cause harm. During outings, safety procedures such as ensuring appropriate levels of supervision and children holding onto ropes when walking around the camp ensure children enjoy their outings in safety.

Children enjoy access to a range of age appropriate resources that are in a suitable condition. Regular checks on the toys ensure they do not pose a risk to children. However, despite being checked for safety, not all toys are complete, particularly the jigsaws, which reduces their play value and the children's sense of achievement upon completion.

Staff's appropriate knowledge of the child protection procedures safeguard children's welfare and ensures appropriate steps are taken in the event a child's safety is at risk. A new disciplinary procedure ensures management are able to take appropriate action in the event an allegation of abuse or neglect is made against a member of staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled within the setting, leaving their parents with ease. They enjoy access to a range of activities provided by staff that are age appropriate and offer variety. However, older children are at times insufficiently challenged. Some resources are available at child level, which allows them to choose their own play. Children experience good relationships with the staff who respond well during discussions, developing children's use of their language skills. Children enjoy working with staff, particularly during construction play and join together as a team to build items such as helicopters with giant Meccano sets. Praise and encouragement offered by staff develops children's confidence and self-esteem. Developing systems in place to record observations on those children aged two years old are beginning to ensure children make progress through the Birth to Three Matters framework.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children experience a range of activities that cover all six areas of learning. However, the balance of learning is not evenly distributed between the areas. There is limited provision of both planned and spontaneous activities for some aspects of mathematical development and communication, language and literacy, with children's records showing less progress made particularly within mathematical development.

Weekly planning identifies the stepping stones for children's intended learning. Children enjoy the activities provided with opportunities to return to a work station to repeat and consolidate the learning opportunity. However, the more able child does not consistently experience sufficient challenge to extend their learning to their full potential. At times, staff conduct observations on children during the session which are used to inform their records of development. During activities, staff use some questioning techniques to extend children's learning and to encourage children to use their thought processes. However, not all activities are routinely evaluated, and the information gained used to assess children's learning and to inform future planning. This limits staff's knowledge of children's progress and how to plan for future learning opportunities.

Children are making good progress within their personal, social and emotional development. They are developing good levels of confidence and self-esteem through praise given by staff and achievable activities, though not all of which fully extend children. They play well together, particularly in the role-play area where they are developing their imaginations, for example, when preparing meals of pizza for their dolls before putting them to bed. During such play, children enjoy their discussions using familiar words and vocabulary to construct simple sentences. They have access to a range of topical books throughout the session, with staff regularly reading stories to encourage children's enjoyment of the written word. Available pencils and writing pads encourage children to use their writing skills within their play, particularly when writing and sending letters. There are few opportunities for children to link together sounds and letters, for example, the first letter of their names when staff label their paintings.

Children are developing their independence through opportunities to pour their own drinks and peel their bananas at snack time. During independent play, such as at the dough table, children enjoy manipulating and gaining control of their small muscles and talking about how the dough feels to touch and stretch. They are able to compare lengths of stretched dough, identifying the biggest and smallest items and adding the number of balls together. However, there are few spontaneous opportunities seized by staff to extend children's mathematical capacity during everyday routines, for example, adding a late arrival to the total number of children present at register time.

All children enthusiastically take part in singing familiar songs, using their bodies to complete the actions. Children enjoy good opportunities within the outside area to develop their physical skills, such as climbing, peddling and generally moving with control. The provision of tools and equipment, for example sandpit resources and scissors, enable the children to develop hand-eye co-ordination and control over their small movements. They enjoy designing and making objects with construction materials with support from staff on how to join objects together. There are some opportunities provided for children to enjoy exploring and investigating within a science box that includes experiments involving items such as magnets. Opportunities to take part in information, communication and technology are improved through resources shared with other settings. Overall children are making steady progress within their development.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children experience a sense of belonging to the setting which is encouraged through individual named pegs and drawers. Staff value the children present and share their time appropriately between children to offer support. Children take responsibility within the group and are encouraged to play an active role in routines, such as tidying up. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children are beginning to develop an understanding of diversity naturally through their play with resources such as small world people of different race and some with disabilities. The occasional celebration of festivals encourages an understanding of how different cultures celebrate events, such as Christmas throughout the world.

Appropriate systems in place ensure children with additional needs receive support to encourage their individual development. Information gathered from parents, such as the use of Makaton sign language, enable staff to meet individual children's needs. Guidance received from outside agencies, for example the area special needs co-ordinator, develops staff's understanding of providing additional support for children.

Children behave well with staff encouraging children to share and take turns. Strategies encourage children to follow general rules for behaviour with clear explanations from staff to increase children's understanding of why it is important to be considerate to others. During routines such as snack time, children say please and thank you.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents have access to appropriate information regarding news, events and the setting's policies and procedures. When children join the group, information gained in partnership with parents enable staff to assess children's starting points for their provision of nursery education and activities. Staff ensure they are available to parents to discuss any concerns and their child's progress through the Foundation Stage, with further opportunities made available for parents to look through children's records. Invitations for parents to make contributions to topics through the sharing their own experiences are made periodically and at times children bring in items from home to add to interest tables.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children benefit from the care offered by a consistent team of staff who are qualified and work well together. Appropriate procedures in place ensure staff are suitably checked to work with children and undergo an induction procedure to ensure they are aware of their role and responsibilities. Children benefit from high ratios of staff to children that ensure they receive good levels of support and settle well.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The newly appointed manager liaises with development workers in order to improve the provision of care and education for children. Staff attend meetings with colleagues from other settings in order to share professional expertise. The manager works hard with the staff in order to implement new initiatives, such as staff appraisals, with action plans in place identifying areas which require additional attention. Staff take part in training opportunities in order to provide appropriate opportunities for children, particularly within the area of special needs. However, few opportunities focus on the area of the Foundation Stage and nursery education.

A committee consisting of military personnel and parents is responsible for the setting. The manager has compiled a good range of information for the committee to ensure they are aware of their role and able to offer the support the staff require in operating the setting. However, committee members have failed to notify Ofsted of changes within the structure as required within regulations; this puts children at risk through the inability of Ofsted to make the appropriate checks on their suitability to be involved with children.

Parents and staff have access to a full set of policies and procedures, which offers good information of the setting's practice. All documentation is available for inspection and contains the required information. Records maintain confidentiality, with systems in place to ensure they are stored securely.

Improvements since the last inspection

The setting has made improvements based on the recommendations set at the last inspections for care and nursery education.

At the last care inspection, the setting was asked to ensure that the person in charge completes appropriate training, the attendance register shows the times of children's arrival and departure, visitors details are recorded in an appropriate book, the operational plan includes a written induction programmed for new staff and students, the organisation of activities promote free choice of play and encourage independence and finally, to ensure that records are maintained detailing children's existing injuries.

There is a new person in charge who is appropriately qualified and experienced to hold the position of manager. Registers detail accurate records of both children and visitors in attendance, which can be relied upon as a record of who is present for roll-call purposes should an emergency occur. The operational plan includes an induction procedure for new staff and students to ensure that both are aware of their role, responsibilities and the setting's practice. Activities are provided at low-level tables within the playroom allowing children to independently access and to choose when to take part. There are some resources stored at child-level to allow children to safely self-select from the storage units. Records of existing injuries that children arrive with ensure staff are aware of monitoring children's welfare, in addition to protecting the staff from allegations of abuse.

At the last care inspection, the setting was asked to improve the planning system to ensure all children are able to achieve in all six areas of learning, to improve opportunities to extend learning and challenge for more able children and to enable children to experience information, communication and technology on a regular basis.

As a result, planning has improved to ensure all six areas of learning are covered, although aspects within mathematical development and communication, language and literacy continue to be areas for ongoing improvement. Opportunities to extend learning and challenge for more able children is also an area for the setting to continue to improve, with inconsistent challenge available to fully extend children to ensure they reach their full potential. However, opportunities have improved for children to experience information, communication and technology through the availability of further resources within the group itself and through other local settings.

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):

- ensure parental acknowledgement of medication administered to children is obtained
- ensure all toys available are complete to enable children to fully enjoy their play and experience a sense of achievement
- ensure any changes within the committee structure are notified to Ofsted and new committee members submit the required documentation.

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):

- increase staff understanding of the Foundation Stage, with particular regard to the planning and evaluation of activities and using information gained to inform future planning
- ensure activities and play opportunities provide children with sufficient challenge and opportunities to extend learning for the more able child
- improve the opportunities for children to participate in regular planned and spontaneous mathematical activities and those which encourage children to link sounds with letters.

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