



Ragamuffins Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY310961
Inspection date	01 November 2006
Inspector	Sally Wride / Rebecca Hadley
Setting Address	265 Birchfield Road, Redditch, Worcestershire, B97 4NB
Telephone number	01527 540321
E-mail	
Registered person	Ragamuffins Day Nurseries Ltd (5403936)
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 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?

Ragamuffins Day Nursery originally opened in 1995 and changed ownership in 2005. It operates from seven rooms within a converted Victorian house in Redditch. The nursery serves the local area and has strong links with local schools.

There are currently 109 children from three months to eight years on roll. This includes 28 funded three and four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week all year round. Sessions are from 07:30 until 18:00. There are 15 full-time and 6 part-time members of staff who work with the children. Over half of the staff have early years qualifications to National Vocational Qualification level 2 or 3. There are

three members of staff currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from a mentor teacher from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children are cared for in an environment that is maintained to a good standard of cleanliness. Toys and resources are sterilised each week, or more often if required to ensure that they remain hygienic for the children to use. Procedures such as staff consistently wearing disposable gloves and aprons for nappy changing sustain high levels of hygiene and help to prevent the spread of infection. Positive steps are taken to promote children's good health and their understanding of good hygiene practice. The children use good quality hand washing resources at appropriate times throughout the day. Older children demonstrate an understanding of good hygiene practice and explain that they are washing their hands to remove the germs. Positive steps are taken to prevent the spread of infection when children become ill and information is provided to parents about the advised minimum exclusion periods.

Children are well nourished. Parents are able to choose whether their children eat hot meals provided by the setting or packed lunches supplied from home. Children's individual dietary requirements are well met as a result and staff have a clear understanding of children's individual needs. Packed lunches are stored appropriately prior to being offered to the children. Hot meals provided to children offer variety and choice and are made with fresh and organic produce, with no salt or sugar added during cooking. The setting provide the children with a breakfast of toast and milk. Parents are also able to provide cereals for their children which ensures that their individual dietary needs, likes and dislikes are well catered for. Children are suitably hydrated because they are provided with frequent drinks at set times throughout the day. However, their independence is not fully promoted because they do not have fresh drinking water readily accessible at other times. Mealtimes are relaxed, social occasions when children sit together around the table to enjoy their food and each other's company. Younger children's independence is fostered as they are encouraged to feed themselves, sensitively supported by staff. Throughout the nursery, simple table manners, such as saying please and thank you are encouraged and warmly praised. Older children have a developing understanding of the importance of eating a healthy diet to help them grow big and strong.

Children develop confidence as they practise and extend their skills during indoor and outdoor physical play. Indoors, babies and younger children are provided with plenty of space to roll, move, pull themselves up and practise their crawling. Their small muscle skills are developed as they explore shape sorters and through the use of construction toys. Weather permitting, children throughout the nursery enjoy outside play twice a day. Babies who are not yet mobile experience and enjoy being outside in the fresh air as they sit on mats and play with a range of resources. Younger children have fun pedalling wheeled toys, practising their throwing and catching skills with balls and using equipment such as the climbing frame and small slide.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children experience a well presented, recently decorated, light and airy care environment that is maintained in good condition. Children are kept safe because the premises are secure and the outdoor area is fully enclosed. The procedures for the arrival and collection of children is well managed to ensure that they are kept safe. Children are protected and their welfare promoted through the daily risk assessment of equipment and premises, both inside and outdoors.

Children enjoy using a wide range of toys and resources, suitable for their ages and stages of development. Babies are provided with resources that are placed within easy reach to ensure that they are well stimulated and entertained during their time at the setting. Younger children's toys and activities are selected by staff and are regularly rotated. Throughout the nursery, a wide range, covering all areas of development are provided. Children are able to make independent decisions about what they would like to play with and how they would like to spend their time.

All staff demonstrate a good understanding of child protection policies and procedures. They have a clear knowledge of the known indicators of child abuse and the action that they should take in the event of a concern about a child in their care. The children develop an understanding of how to keep themselves safe as they regularly practise emergency evacuation procedures and the action that they should take in the event of a fire. Staff talk to the children throughout the day as issues arise and explain why certain situations might be dangerous, for example, children sitting on inappropriate resources.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The nursery offers a warm and welcoming childcare experience where children are happy and settled. Babies and younger children receive warm cuddles and supportive contact with trusted key worker staff. They have good relationships with the staff, which increases their sense of security and well-being and benefit from routines that are consistent with their needs at home. They enjoy many sensory play experiences, such as corn-flour, spaghetti and jelly play. However, they have more limited opportunities to explore through their senses with natural materials. This is because the vast majority of resources provided are made of plastic.

Babies develop early communication skills as they interact with staff, who respond to their sounds during play. Toddlers improve their communication and creative skills as they enjoy regular music sessions with action rhymes and songs and musical instruments. They eagerly dance along with staff to familiar music, recreating dance moves and having fun. They enjoy looking at books on their own, in a group or sit quietly with a member of staff. Younger children confidently talk about important events with staff and their peers. One child said 'I'm going to watch the fireworks tonight' which led to a conversation about the colours that the children might see in the sky. Throughout the setting, the staff sit with the children and actively involve themselves in the children's games. They make suggestions and input ideas in to children's play to develop the experiences and children's thinking. For example, as a toddler sat in a plastic

toy box playing with toys, a member of staff suggested that he was in a boat. The children enjoy art and craft activities such as painting, hand and feet printing, gluing and sticking. Their art work is widely displayed around the setting, but much of this is positioned above child height which means that it cannot be easily seen or explored by the children. They enjoy using play dough and use a range of tools to model, cut and shape.

The staff effectively use the Birth to three matters framework to implement ideas in to the activities and experiences offered to the younger children. They have undertaken relevant training and plan activities each day, based on the monthly themes that run throughout the nursery. An attractive display has been created for parents that details the four different aspects of the framework and provides photographic evidence of the activities that the children have enjoyed and participated in during their time at the setting. The younger children take it in turns to take home a knitted doll called 'Sammy scarecrow'. Children are chosen on a rolling rota and decisions made based on children's achievements and how they have behaved. Parents are encouraged to be part of their children's learning by completing a written diary of the activities and adventures enjoyed whilst 'Sammy scarecrow' has been in their care. This helps the children to feel secure as staff readily talk about and share information about the child's home life.

Nursery Education:

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals. Effective use of time, accommodation and resources helps to develop the children's learning. They are able to access activities independently and make choices about how they would like to spend their time. Staff sit with the children, asking questions to help them think. Activities are planned to provide a broad and balanced range across the six areas of learning. However, evaluation and assessment is not used to inform planning to help children move forward at a pace suitable to their individual learning needs.

Children have a positive attitude to learning. They are interested and motivated to learn and to try activities. They often jump up and down and clap with excitement. For example, when looking at pictures of their Halloween party and when singing along to the computer. They are forming good relationships with both adults and their peers. They are becoming aware of their own needs and those of their friends. For example, one child helped another to push a bike when they couldn't pedal it. Another child held the jigsaw puzzle box so that his friend could easily put the pieces away. The children understand the difference between right and wrong and the reasons why. They consider the consequences of their actions for themselves and others. For example, a child being pushed on a bike asked the child who was pushing to go faster. The child pushing said "no in case I knock someone over". Children have a star system to encourage good behaviour. The child with the most stars at the end of the week is awarded a certificate and takes the 'Mary Mary' doll home for the weekend.

The children use speech to organise and explore real and imagined experiences, ideas and feelings through show and tell, and news times. Children enjoy listening to stories, join in their favourite ones and often read aloud to their peers. Children are beginning to understand that print carries meaning and that it is read from left to right. They have opportunities to recognise

their names by finding and posting their name as they arrive at the setting. Children are beginning to make marks when using the mark making table and chalking activities.

Children are developing number and problem solving skills through a variety of activities, such as counting to 10 when playing blast off with a constructed rocket. They can count spots or legs on insects, how many jumps and hops they take outside, and point to 3 children when guessing pat the dog, pat the cat. They show a developing understanding of addition and subtraction through practical activities such as simple singing rhymes, songs and using games on the computer. The children use language to describe and compare shape, position, size and quantity through activities, such as measuring and comparing the length of worms, and using words such as bigger and smaller. For example, a child stretching his arms to touch the door frames said "I've got long arms". Two children at snack time compared the amount of milk in their cups saying "We've got the same".

Children enjoy exploring and investigating new and familiar objects such as objects that float and sink and the difference between solid and melted chocolate. They compare rough and smooth and wet and dry. The children know about and use Information Communication Technology (ICT) and programmable toys such as tills, a microscope, magnifying glass, a telephone and a computer to support their learning. They easily recognise and name familiar objects from their environment, such as insects. One child said "Worms live in the ground and the dirt". Children begin to know about their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people through displays of people different to themselves, by celebrating festivals such as Harvest, Chinese New Year, Diwali, Rosh Hashanah, and painting Mendhi hands.

Children move confidently with control and co-ordination in a variety of ways. They move imaginatively and safely and are developing an awareness of space, weaving around each other and obstacles. They can pedal forwards and backwards on bikes, hop, move slowly and quickly and slither like snakes. They experience trips to the park where they use equipment such as swings, slides and roundabouts to further develop their physical skills. The children recognise the importance of staying healthy. They understand that they wash their hands to get rid of germs and that eating healthy food makes them grow big and strong. One child said "Milk makes us strong". They use their imaginations in a variety of ways and enjoy the role play area, which is often transformed into different scenarios such as a vets and a shoe shop. The children recognise and can name different sounds such as a drum, guitar, piano, clapping, an alarm clock and a mouth organ. They respond with enthusiasm to action songs such as 'the music man' and 'the grand old duke of York'. Overall, children make good progress in all areas of learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are well settled and secure in their care environment and are fully included in the life of the setting. Staff value and respect their individuality and work closely with parents to ensure that children's individual needs are well met. The children have good opportunities to develop an appreciation of the world in which they live through well planned relevant activities throughout the year. They have access to a good range of resources that reflect positive images of diversity and enjoy exploring posters that they have helped to create that show people of differing abilities, races and genders. A good level of support is provided for children with

learning difficulties or disabilities. The staff are proactive in working in partnership with parents and seeking advice and support from external agencies and health professionals. Detailed written individual education plans (IEP's) are produced, with parents fully involved in identifying targets areas of learning for their child.

Children's behaviour throughout the nursery is good. Staff use age-appropriate strategies for managing any behavioural issues that arise, such as distraction and intervention in sharing issues. This ensures that children learn about playing fairly in a way best suited to their level of understanding and maturity. The children receive warm praise and encouragement which develops their self-esteem well. They beam with delight as they receive stickers as rewards for positive behaviour and for helping to tidy away. As a result, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Friendly but professional relationships have been formed between staff and parents, which contributes to children's well-being. They are provided with regular newsletters and have access to information about planned activities for the younger children, which are displayed on notice boards throughout the setting. Parents are well informed about the care of their children through daily verbal exchanges of information and also through written information recorded in daily diaries, which are shared and discussed at the end of each day. Parents have unlimited access to the settings range of policies and procedures, which are made available in a file in the reception area and help parents to understand how their children are cared for and the operational procedures of the nursery.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. There are some procedures in place in the pre-school to pass on information to parents, such as newsletters, parent's evenings and a notice board outside the pre-school room. However, although some activities in the room such as water, sand and role play are labelled to show the learning intention, some parents still appear to be unsure about the Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage and the early learning goals. There are limited procedures in place to involve parents in their children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from the effective organisation of space and resources. The base rooms have been well thought out to ensure that children are grouped appropriately according to their age, and arranged to maximise play opportunities for children. The organisation of space allows for them to move around safely and freely within their base room and enables them to make some choices about how they would like to spend their time at the setting. Staff are effectively deployed to ensure that children are provided with the individual attention and support that they need. Staff are enthusiastic and work well together as a team. They work directly with the children, asking them questions to encourage their thinking and responding to children's interests. There are thorough recruitment and vetting procedures in place which ensure that children are only cared for by suitable people. Induction training works well in practice and ensures that new staff quickly settle into their new roles. Staff training is given high priority. They regularly attend local short courses to ensure that they are up to date with new ideas and information. Staff speak highly of the opportunities that are available to them to extend their own professional development.

All of the required documentation that promotes children's health, safety and well being is in place, well maintained and regularly reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet requirements. All records are stored confidentially and are only accessed by the staff at the setting. Many well thought out policies and procedures are in place and are understood by staff. They are shared with parents to ensure that they have an understanding of the operational procedures within the setting.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. The provider, manager and deputy of the setting have attended Foundation Stage training and have a good knowledge of the early learning goals. They are very aware of the need for all staff working with the pre-school children to attend training. They are fully supportive of staff and have implemented procedures to work closely with them through the transitional period. They regularly monitor and assess the setting and are totally committed to providing a high level of care and education for the children. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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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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):

- ensure fresh drinking water is available to children at all times
- extend opportunities for all younger children to have access to resources made of natural materials

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 planning, evaluation and assessment to ensure that children move forward at a pace suitable to their individual learning needs
- continue to develop the partnership with parents to improve their knowledge of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage and to ensure that they are fully involved in their children's 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