



Rising Fives Pre-School Group

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	507850
Inspection date	19 January 2007
Inspector	Penny Wood
Setting Address	OLD PRIMARY SCHOOL CANTEEN, WELLS LANE, WHITCHURCH, HAMPSHIRE, RG28 7AN
Telephone number	01256 893708
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Registered person	Rising Fives Pre-School Group
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	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.

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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Rising Fives Pre-school Group is a committee run pre-school situated in Whitchurch, Hampshire. It originally opened in 1972, moving to its current premises in 1974. The group operates from two large rooms within the hall, with a covered tarmac play area to the side of the property for outside play and activities.

A maximum of 26 children aged between two and five years old may attend the group at any one time and there are currently 51 children on roll, 41 of which receive funding for nursery education. The group open each weekday from 09:15 to 11:45 and 12:45 to 15:15, term time only.

The nursery employs nine members of staff who work directly with the children, eight of which hold a relevant childcare qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are developing an understanding of appropriate hygiene procedures through their daily routines. The premises and systems in place promote children's independence within their self-care, for example, they are able to access low level sinks and paper towel dispensers when washing their hands and tissue is readily available to enable children to blow their own noses. Children regularly wash their hands after activities and before eating, although this is not always under running water to reduce the spread of germs between children.

Staff gently remind children to wash their hands, particularly after visiting the toilet. However, children do not always flush the toilets after use in order to promote a healthy environment. Staff adopt appropriate hygiene procedures in order to ensure the equipment and toys are clean and suitable for children's use, such as using anti-bacterial spray on tables and time is set-aside to clean the toys.

Children receive appropriate care in the event of minor accidents and illness from staff that are trained in first aid. Parental consent to allow staff to seek further advice or treatment ensures children receive professional medical care when necessary. Documentation to record such events contains the required information and staff share health records with parents to ensure they are informed of the care their children receive. The exclusion of sick children reduces the risk of cross-infection of illnesses, with information available to parents to advise when to keep their child at home.

Daily opportunities to participate in physical exercise both inside and out, promote children's health and wellbeing. Children enjoy using a range of equipment, such as climbing frames and tricycles and participating in games, such as 'What Time is it Mr Wolf?' all of which encourage children's development of co-ordination skills and physical control.

Children receive a range of snacks which include biscuits and healthy options of fruit and vegetables. When cooking takes place as part of an activity, children enjoy eating their creations at snack-time. Records of children's allergies ensure staff are aware of individual dietary needs and only receive foods that are suitable. Children receive a drink of water or milk at snack-time to ensure they do not become thirsty during the session. However, water is not always readily available during the session to allow children to help themselves.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The effective organisation of the building enables children to move freely between defined areas of play. The introduction of a covered play area outside enables the children to benefit from activities and play opportunities in the fresh air regardless of the weather conditions. Children enjoy access to a good variety of toys, all of which are regularly checked by staff. Within the building, wall displays of children's work, photographs of past outings and information posters promote a visually stimulating and welcoming environment for the children.

Good measures in place, for example, fireguards and gates to hazardous areas such as the kitchen, reduce the risk of harm to children. Double handles on doors and the use of bolts on the gates outside ensure the building is secure and prevent children from leaving the premises unsupervised. Staff check the premises on a daily basis to ensure no hazards prevail, with in-depth risk assessments completed periodically. Regular practises of the fire evacuation procedures ensure children and staff are aware of the steps to follow in an emergency. Fire exits are accessible and clearly marked. In the event of an emergency, clear procedures displayed for staff's reference ensures they take prompt and effective action. For example, information regarding the contact number of the emergency services, the address and directions to the setting ensures staff are able to give concise information to the relevant service when in a stressful situation.

During their play, children are learning how to keep themselves safe through clear instructions and guidance from staff. For example, when using the climbing frame staff prompt the children to check that previous sliders have moved away. Visitors to the group, such as Road Safety Officers, encourage the children to think and learn about safety in the wider world. Most staff have a clear understanding of the child protection policy and procedures, with systems in place to promote children's welfare and safety.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enter the setting with ease and quickly settle. They happily engage with each other and the staff, in both conversation and their play. Children enjoy a good range of play opportunities during each session, with a rotation system in place to ensure they enjoy variety and the full range of toys available. Staff plan an interesting range of activities for all ages which they vary according to the age and abilities of the children present.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff manage the session well, offering children time to participate in planned activities when they wish, time to explore and initiate their own choices of play and time for short structured activities in small groups. Activities are varied, particularly between the morning and afternoon sessions, ensuring appropriate challenges are available for the range of children present.

Planning covers all areas of learning within the curriculum, with individual stepping stones identified to encourage specific areas of learning. The group adopt an effective keyworker system whereby individual staff are responsible for monitoring specific children and maintaining their records of development. However, staff are not consistent in the way they record this information. When providing activities, all staff ensure they are aware of the intended learning for that activity and follow the plans in place. Observations made on children are used within children's records as evidence of how children are achieving.

A good variety of interesting opportunities is available for children all of which ensure children are keen and eager participants. Children play with confidence, approaching adults for support when they wish. They co-operate in their play with each other, taking turns with equipment,

such as the climbing frame, which is facilitated by the staff's management of such activities. Children are gaining good control of their bodies, not only when using larger apparatus, but also with equipment such as scissors, paint brushes and during threading activities. They move with control within the available space, negotiating pathways from one room to another and between activity tables. During games such as musical statues, children are learning how to move to rhythm and at different speeds, stopping and holding a position with control. Children are able to see to their own needs; going to the toilet when required and putting on their coats before going outside to play.

Children are developing good use of their language skills. They engage each other and staff in conversations during activities and social times, such as snack-time. Staff use good techniques to encourage children to use their skills, such as asking open-ended questions that require more than a 'yes' or 'no' answer and providing games such as 'Who Am I?' that require children to ask questions. Staff encourage children to develop their letter recognition combining with letters with actions to encourage children to remember. Staff use a variety of ways to encourage children to remember how to form letters, such as finger writing in sand and making letters out of dough. Children enjoy regular stories within the group, with their interest in books encouraged through role-play scenarios, such as a library corner.

Children experience a range of opportunities to encourage their mathematical development. They enjoy counting the number of children present and games that require them to recognise when a number is missing from the sequence of zero to nine. Staff encourage children to recognise numbers within the environment, such as scores on a ball game. Staff plan for children to experience some opportunities to develop their calculating skills, such as comparing groups of objects. However, this is an area which requires further attention to ensure children gain a wide range of calculating skills both within planned and spontaneous activities. Through the use of resources, such as computers and associated programs, children are able to both develop their experience of using a range of equipment as the same time as certain skills, such as shape recognition. Children confidently use a mouse when using the computer, developing good co-ordination skills.

Children enjoy making things with junk modelling and with construction toys. They experiment when connecting items together to assess whether they can grow bigger or if they will fall apart. During the summer they enjoy watching seeds and plants grow in the outside area, at times experimenting with a range of conditions to assess the differences in their growth. They have particularly enjoyed their own butterfly farm, watching the process from eggs to butterflies and finally releasing them outside.

Visitors to the group encourage children's awareness of the outside world, particularly how people help us. For example, the group receive annual visits from the Police, Fire Service and the Road Safety Officer. During the celebration of cultural festivals, children are developing their awareness of diversity, which is further promoted through a range of toys that depict positive images of race, gender and disability.

Children are developing good use of their imaginations through role play within the home corner and with resources such as castles and small world people. They enjoy building their creative awareness through exploring media and materials, for example, mixing paints together

and creating new colours in their patterns. They enjoy working with dough, sand and with different methods of joining materials together, such as glue sticks and adhesive tape. Staff provide children with opportunities to work independently within their crafts, in addition to large scale activities in a group, such as creating wall displays.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children take an active part within the group, for example, handing out snacks at snack-time and most children help tidy up. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They benefit from the attention they receive from the staff, who move to support children during activities and play. Staff ensure all children have the opportunity to take part and experience planned activities, with activities adapted where necessary to allow all children to participate, particularly when children have additional needs. Appropriate systems identify children who require additional support, with links in place with external agencies to support those children, their families and staff.

Generally, children behave well with staff adopting age appropriate strategies to manage their behaviour. Overall, the rules in place, such as not throwing sand in the sandpit, are understandable and achievable for the children. However, not all staff consistently apply the behaviour management strategies resulting in children receiving mixed messages about their behaviour. For example, after being moved by staff from playing underneath one table, children soon relocated themselves to playing under a different table, where they stayed until they chose to come out. Good systems are in place to encourage children to take turns, particularly during popular activities, such as playing on the climbing frame. Children are gaining good use of their manners, with staff encouraging them to say 'please' rather than 'I want' and using their hands when coughing.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents take an active role within the group, both supporting the committee and the staff on a voluntary basis. Staff ensure parents have access to a good range of information about the group through their prospectus, welcome pack, letters, notice boards and displays regarding the Foundation Stage and of children's work. A comprehensive set of policies and procedures offer parents information on the group's daily practice, with regular reviews by the committee to ensure they are up-to-date. Parents have access to children's records of achievements, with staff willing to clarify points and discuss children's development. The setting invites parents to play an active role in their child's education. For example, they contribute to topics and attend literacy workshops at the pre-school. Information provided for parents within children's home folders, offer information on how parents are able to support children with their writing skills, particularly cursive writing.

Parents comment on how approachable they find the staff. The complaints policy details how parents may raise a concern with the group and the regulator (Ofsted) and although the group have not received any complaints to date, they are yet to instigate a system for recording complaints received in writing as required in regulations. Staff value contributions from parents on how they may improve their practice and invite parents to forward ideas through questionnaires and suggestion boxes.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children benefit from the high ratio of staff, the majority of which hold a relevant qualification in childcare. Appropriate systems ensure staff undergo checking procedures to certify they are suitable to work with children. A reviewed induction procedure ensures staff receive information regarding the group's practice, the policies and procedures. Effective deployment of staff ensures all are aware of their role during each session. The dividing of children within groups during each session ensures all children experience each activity and the opportunities on offer.

Most documentation is in place and contains the required information and all of which maintain confidentiality. An operational plan of the group's procedures is in place, although not all information is relevant to the current working systems. All documentation is stored securely and available for inspection.

Leadership and Management is good. Both the committee and manager are fully aware of their roles within the operation of the pre-school. Regular meetings are held between the committee and the manager with the intention of improving the provision for children and their families. Regular staff meetings enable all staff to discuss any issues, ideas for future topics and planning. All staff enjoy opportunities to attend training courses in order to extend their professional expertise. Post training, staff cascade the information gained to enable all staff to benefit from the training received. The group benefit from input and advice from the local authority and the feeder primary school, with which they have forged strong bonds. Staff are encouraged to attend cluster group meetings with other providers, at which they are able to share their professional expertise.

Improvements since the last inspection

The group have improved their provision of care and education based on the recommendations that were raised at the last inspection.

At the last care inspection, the group were asked to inform Ofsted of relevant changes, improve the organisation and accessibility of toys, maintain adequate detail and confidentiality in the accident book and to ensure all documentation is in place and up to date. As a result of this, the group have put good procedures in place to ensure Ofsted have been informed of all changes, such as the changes that occur within the committee and staff structure. This enables Ofsted to carry out various checks to ensure those adults who have contact with children are suitable to do so. Children enjoy access to a good range of activities and toys on a daily basis. In addition to being able to access those resources provided by staff, children are able to access further resources stored in accessible units, improving their ability to self-select and initiate their own choices. Accident records contain the required information with one page per child to ensure confidentiality is maintained. With the exception of the record of complaints, all regulatory documentation is in place and relevant to the group's current procedures, ensuring staff and parents may refer to these documents for guidance and as a record of events which take place.

At the last inspection for nursery education, the group were asked to increase children's enjoyment of books on an informal basis and to increase opportunities for older or more able children to use simple calculations in practical activities using associated vocabulary. As a result, children enjoy increased opportunities to develop their enjoyment of books through role-play areas which are used in a variety of different ways, including a library scenario. Children are able to access a range of books from the book corner which is complemented by a small seating area aimed at inviting children to spend time within this area. Increasing opportunities for children to use simple calculations is an area for ongoing improvement. Children enjoy some planned activities aimed at improving children's calculating skills, although there are fewer opportunities for children to do this on a spontaneous level during everyday routines.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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.

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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 all staff have a thorough understanding of the child protection policy and the systems in place to promote children's welfare and safety
- ensure staff are consistent in managing children's behaviour
- put in place a system for recording complaints and make available to parents.

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):

- consolidate the systems in-place for recording children's achievements and development
- increase opportunities for children to use simple calculations in practical activities and daily routines.

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