



## Rocking Horse Nursery and creche

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110619
<b>Inspection date</b>	06 March 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Carol Readman / Amanda May
<b>Setting Address</b>	Newbury Racecourse, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 7NZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01635 48969
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Rocking Horse Nursery and Creche
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care, Out of School 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 good. 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 Day Nursery is owned and funded by Newbury Racecourse. It opened in 1992. The children are cared for in six separate areas. In a separate building on the same site they also run an after school club for children from the local schools. During weekends when there is a race meeting on the nursery provides a crèche for the children of patrons of the racecourse. The nursery is within the boundaries of the racecourse complex, which is close to Newbury town centre. The provision is used by families who live outside the immediate area as well as those who live locally and in the nearby villages.

There are currently 133 children on roll. Of these, 42 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with special needs. They currently have some children attending who speak English as an additional language.

The Nursery opens five days a week and is open between 08:00 and 18:00 for 52 weeks of the year with the exception of Bank Holidays and the period between Christmas and New Year.

There are 23 members of staff working with the children. Of these, 19 staff have appropriate early years qualifications and four are currently working towards an appropriate qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children are developing a healthy lifestyle during their time at the nursery. They benefit from a healthy diet of wholesome, nutritious, freshly-cooked meals and snacks which promote their growth and development. Meal and snack times are social occasions. Children sit together and discuss their favourite fruits. Drinking water is always available. Throughout the provision children receive food according to parental wishes. Clear dietary information is available in the kitchen and other food preparation areas regarding all children. This ensures children's special dietary needs and routines are met. For example, the kitchen staff produce a soya free menu to meet specific dietary needs. In the after school club, children help to prepare a substantial healthy snack when they arrive from school. Staff talk to the children about what they are eating and why it is good for them, developing the children's understanding of a healthy diet. Baby milk and weaning food is prepared and stored appropriately, ensuring the youngest children's dietary needs are met well.

Children play in a very clean environment where staff follow highly effective hygiene procedures. The children become increasingly independent in their personal care and hygiene as they progress through the nursery. Staff tell the children why they wash their hands and older children know they are washing away germs that could make them ill.

Children experience good opportunities for fresh air and physical exercise everyday in the large outdoor garden areas. Suitable sized climbing frames and slides, ride on toys and balls enable the children to develop their physical skills and senses in the pleasant, secure outside areas. Children learn co-ordination and gain control of large muscles as they join in organised ball games and learn to kick footballs with increasing accuracy. Weekly exercise sessions further develop physical skills and help to ensure children develop an active lifestyle. Staff ensure that all children have adequate rest, active play and nourishment which help them to enjoy their time within the setting. Information from parents informs the staff of individual routines for small children. This helps to promote continuity of care. Staff record accidents that occur at the setting appropriately. When a child arrives at the nursery with a pre-existing injury this is recorded as an incident. However, in some playrooms the incidents involving different children are recorded on the same page. This breaches the rules of confidentiality. Children's welfare is managed well due to the high proportion of staff who hold a relevant first aid certificate and the clear policies and procedures that are used regarding sickness.

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

The provision is good.

Children play safely in a warm, clean environment that is in very good order, bright and welcoming to children. There are colourful wall displays and welcome posters in different languages. Children and their parents receive warm welcomes from the staff. Parents register their children each day in the playrooms. Throughout the setting, children are cared for in different play rooms according to their ages and stages of development. All rooms are well equipped with sufficient, appropriate equipment for all the age groups they care for. This enables the children to play, eat and sleep in comfort and safety.

Children play with a wide range of bright, stimulating toys and resources. They enjoy playing in well equipped role play corners and have fun in a large ball-pool. Staff ensure that all the children have appropriate resources available to them. For example, they collect toys from the whole nursery to ensure that there are sufficient, appropriate resources for the range of children expected at the race day crèche. Staff are proactive in seeing that the toys are very clean and in good condition. Baby toys are cleaned thoroughly every week and soft toys washed. Staff pay particular attention to ensuring that toys that babies put in their mouths are always clean.

The managers and staff give top priority to children's safety. There is a thorough risk assessment that is revised as hazards are identified. New procedures are quickly put into place to improve children's safety. For example, staff ensure that children are safe as they go for walks around the racecourse. They have recently revised procedures to enhance children's safety when crossing the racecourse car park to visit the stables. Children learn to keep themselves safe as they play. Gentle reminders not to run in playrooms and corridors as they could bump into others helps children understand the need for rules to keep themselves and others safe.

Staff have sound knowledge of child protection issues. This safeguards children's welfare. Staff are aware of their role in child protection and the nominated person is aware of the routes of referral and local procedures.

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

The provision is good.

Children really enjoy their time at the nursery. They experience a broad and varied range of both planned and spontaneous activities which contribute to their development and learning. For example, staff encourage children to join their friend in a spontaneous music and movement activity. Children giggle and jump excitedly as they take part. Children are confident to extend their own play by offering visitors to the setting a pretend cup of tea. They enjoy snuggling up next to their carers to share books and listen to stories, talking about the pictures.

Children relate very well to others at the setting. They chat happily as they make crowns and bracelets from linking model elephants. They help each other to make matching sets and parade them proudly, showing other children their achievements. Warm and genuine praise from staff helps children to develop confidence and self-esteem. Children develop imaginary skills as they dress up and play in the home corner.

Children arrive at the setting eager to run to members of staff, who greet them warmly by name and give them a welcoming hug. Children understand the session's routines which helps them feel secure because they know what to do and when to do it. They help staff tidy up, enjoying helping their friends to carry a rug and the play garage to the cupboard. During the race day crèche, children who have not attended before receive warm and caring welcomes. Staff are keen to find out from parents how best to care for the child. The children settle quickly and enjoy playing with toys or a fun game in the ball pool area. In the after school club children enjoy excellent relationships with the staff and the other children. They arrive from school and have a chance to recharge their batteries before enjoying highly amusing activities, such as team games where they race to wrap their friends up as mummies.

Good use of the Birth to three matters framework in the playrooms means that staff plan varied and stimulating activities that enhance the development of the younger children. A good range of low level storage provides children with the opportunities to choose their toys and learn to become independent in their play.

### Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. A range of generally effective teaching methods ensure that children make sound progress towards early learning goals given their starting points and capabilities. Children are generally at ease at the setting and staff support them in developing a sense of right and wrong. However, some activities, such as craft and collage work are restricted due to ineffective teaching methods and inconsistencies in knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum. These activities are very adult directed with children following instructions from staff on how to complete tasks. This limits their development in terms of learning to explore, investigate and develop their own ideas.

Children learn to develop caring and trusting relationships with other children and adults at the setting. The children learn to concentrate and sit to listen to the story they have voted to hear. They are developing an awareness of their own needs and to show care and concern for others. Children have easy access to the toys and resources that staff put out each day. However, there is limited scope to access additional resources independently. This inhibits children's ability to use their own initiative and develop independence skills in making choices about their play.

The children are beginning to learn mathematical skills in their play. The staff support them as they count, using abacuses and enjoy fun rhymes and songs that extend their learning. Children talk about size and shape as they sort the linking model elephants and can recognise the biggest and smallest of a group of objects. They learn about the world around them as they tend the nursery garden. They really enjoy the time they spend there, helping staff care for the plants and discovering how things grow. A picture diary of it's development over the last year helps children develop a sense of time and place as they talk about the garden and how it changed through the seasons. Activities using the computer are well supported and children quickly learn to operate the mouse to complete games.

Children enjoy music and movement sessions and have great fun playing musical instruments and choosing favourite nursery rhymes to sing. They use their imagination very well, acting

out taking food orders in the Chinese restaurant and making breakfast for the baby dolls in the home corner. Children learn to recognise different colours through themed activities such as Red Nose Day and a yellow theme for St. David's Day.

Children develop good physical skills learning to travel through tunnels and to balance and climb on the apparatus in the playground. They learn small muscle control, playing with play dough and learning to use pencils and paintbrushes.

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

The provision is good.

Children at the setting are relaxed, settled and at home at the setting. Staff know the children that they care for very well. They help them settle into the setting and continue to ensure that the children are happy and feel they really belong. Children have positive attitudes to each other and play harmoniously together. The staff support children in helping to plan their play. Staff help younger children select toys from shelves around the room and older children help to set up the room for a free play session. Children learn to care for and respect others, aided by the staff who are excellent role models. Staff treat all the children as equals and support them in all activities. Children have opportunities to learn about all in society. They have a wide range of toys and posters on the walls that help children form positive images of all in a diverse society. The provision welcomes children with learning difficulties and disabilities. Staff become experienced in their care, following individual plans and working with outside agencies to support them.

Children are very well behaved and play well together. In the after school club, children write their own behaviour rules and decide their own menus and activities. This helps children feel valued and special. When playing in the playground, all children develop confidence as staff encourage turn taking when using the tunnels and slides and sharing of bicycles and ride in pedal cars. This helps children develop self-confidence and a sense of belonging. Staff praise children, encouraging them to take pride in their behaviour. Children learn to care for others in positive, practical ways, such as helping a friend to buckle up their shoes.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children learn to reflect on themselves and their relationships with others, such as family members. They learn to wonder at how plants and flowers grow from what they can see in their special nursery garden. Children interact well with both other children and the adults that care for them. They enjoy social meal and snack times, talking about their friends and family. Children learn to respect others in a diverse society and learn about the wider world community. They enjoy learning about the Welsh community as they celebrate St. David's Day. They learn about China, its food and style of writing as they celebrate the Chinese New Year. They also enjoy running a pretend Chinese restaurant in the pre-school playrooms.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents feel that they are well informed about their child's education. They receive information about the Foundation Stage curriculum when their child enters the nursery. Parents meet with staff regularly to discuss how their child is progressing in their learning. Staff develop a friendly, working relationship with parents who value the setting and are very happy with the care their children receive. Information regarding

children's key worker is displayed on the notice board and parents freely exchange information about their child's achievements on a daily basis. Younger children have daily record books for parents to tell about the child's day from their feeding and nappy changing to what they have done that day. Parents and staff work together to ensure that children receive continuity of care in a warm and friendly setting.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The setting is well organised to care for children. Managers and staff have a clear sense of purpose and look continuously to improving the provision and the already good quality care they provide for children. Children's care is enhanced by generally efficient and effective organisation. However, staff are not always deployed effectively. This means that there are occasions when children are not sufficiently stimulated and challenged in their play.

There are robust recruitment and vetting procedures in place to ensure that children are protected and cared for by adults committed to the wellbeing of children and supporting their development. Good use of the environment contributes to the health, safety, enjoyment and achievement for all the children. There are good policies and procedures that generally work well in practice to promote children's health and safety. This ensures that all are free to play in a warm, caring environment where all participate fully.

The leadership and management is satisfactory. The managers have a clear vision and aims for the setting. They cascade these objectives effectively to staff. This results in staff being well motivated and genuinely committed to providing care and education for the children. Staff devise long, medium and weekly plans to bring about sound outcomes for children and enable them to make steady progress towards the early learning goals. Staff record children's progress towards these goals and share these with parents. Not all staff have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum. The managers do not always deploy staff effectively to ensure that knowledge is shared to promote effective teaching methods.

Overall, children thrive at the setting and play happily in a warm, friendly and caring environment. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the setting was asked to make a number of improvements.

They were asked to ensure that all staff have a clear understanding of the children's dietary requirements. Children's dietary requirements are now clearly displayed in each playroom and in all other food preparation areas. Staff have a good awareness of the dietary needs of the children and ensure that these are respected. This improves children's health and wellbeing.

Staff and managers were asked to improve fire safety by ensuring regular fire drills and recording details of these drills. Children's safety is improved as monthly fire drills now take place. These are detailed in a fire safety log and evaluated to ensure constant improvement.

Staff were requested to take emergency details of children on outings around the racecourse in order to improve their safety in the event of an emergency. All details are now carried by staff, thus improving children's safety.

They were asked to develop a clear procedure in their child protection policy to follow in the event of an allegation of abuse or neglect being made against a member of staff. The managers have developed a clear procedure and incorporated this into their written child protection policy. This improves children's safety and protects their welfare.

The setting was asked to ensure that parents are made aware of the nursery's policies and procedures and gave their written permission for the setting to seek emergency advice or treatment for children in the crèche. They were also asked to ensure that the registers showed hours of attendance and a visitors book was maintained. Parents now sign all necessary written permissions. They sign children in and out of the setting and complete the times their children arrive and depart. Parents are given information about the setting's policies and procedures when their child starts at the nursery. Visitors may only attend by appointment. They are requested to sign in and out of the setting in the visitors book. This improves children's safety.

During the nursery education inspection, the setting was asked to ensure that all staff are confident in their knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how stepping stones and early learning goals relate to the activities and children's development. They were also asked to improve their planning to show how children are grouped for activities, the learning outcomes of activities and how this supports and extends individual learning development. Planning has now been extended to show learning outcomes and staff take individual learning needs into account when planning. Children work in groups supported by their key workers to complete tasks. However, not all key workers are secure in their knowledge of the Foundation Stage. This limits the effectiveness of the staff's ability to deliver activities in ways likely to effectively enhance learning. This impacts children's opportunities for learning.

The setting was also asked to extend opportunities for older children to write familiar words and simple sentences and to express themselves freely in areas of art and crafts. Children now have opportunities to write their names and can use supplies of paper and pencils freely available in role play areas to practise writing their names and those of their friends. They make pretend lists of food orders using menus for guidance. This improves their writing skills. They use name cards to ensure that they form letters correctly. However, art and craft work is still very adult directed. There is some scope for children to express themselves in free painting, but craft and collage work results in a polished product that children have had very little input into. Most input is very adult led. This limits their creativity and individuality and restricts free expression.

### **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.



## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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 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):

- develop methods of recording incidents in all rooms to ensure confidentiality is maintained at all times
- monitor and evaluate staff deployment in all rooms to ensure children are stimulated and challenged effectively in their care, learning and play (this also applies to nursery education).

#### 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 a range of effective teaching methods to support children in their learning
- continue to develop children's independence by encouraging wider selection of resources and support them in making choices about their learning
- continue to develop staff's knowledge of the Foundation Stage and encourage them to share their knowledge.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)