



Rayleigh Methodist Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	203893
Inspection date	21 March 2007
Inspector	Anne Daly
Setting Address	Rayleigh Methodist Church, Eastwood Road, Rayleigh, Essex, SS6 7JP
Telephone number	07749 801354
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Registered person	Rayleigh Methodist Pre School
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Rayleigh Methodist Pre-School is a committee-run setting. It opened in 1981 and operates from three rooms within Church premises in the centre of Rayleigh, Essex. A maximum of 30 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each term time weekday from 09:15 until 11:45 and on Tuesday and Friday afternoons from 13:15 until 15:45. All children share access to a secure enclosed outside play area.

There are currently 61 children from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 41 receive funding for early years education. Children come from the local and wider catchment areas. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs 10 members of staff. Of these, seven staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff is working towards a qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are developing a sound understanding of the need to stay healthy, because staff have a secure knowledge of appropriate hygiene procedures to control infections. Their support and guidance help children to gain an understanding of hygiene and to become increasingly independent in their personal care. Children understand the need to wash their hands after using the toilet, because they know that their hands carry germs. However, they also know that the soap bars look very grubby and dirty, resulting in a possible risk of cross-infection.

Children are protected from the spread of infection by the setting's written sickness policy being shared with parents and carers, to ensure that they know when to keep their unwell children at home. They are alerted if their child becomes ill and staff understand and implement the setting's policy to prevent the spread of illness. Children who need to sleep or who become poorly during a session are allowed to rest until parents can come to collect them. These measures ensure that children's health issues are responded to in an appropriate way.

Children are protected by the majority of staff holding first aid qualifications to ensure that they can effectively handle any minor injuries. Parents and carers have given their written permission for staff to administer emergency first aid to children. However, children are not fully protected as staff have not yet requested parents' and carers' written agreement for the seeking of emergency medical advice or treatment following a serious accident.

Children enjoy eating nutritious, balanced snacks supplied by the pre-school or their parents. Their dietary needs are effectively met, because staff request information from parents and carers about their children's dietary requirements and allergies. All allergies and dietary requirements are documented and the daily record alerts staff to ensure that children are not allowed to eat anything unsuitable. Staff talk with the children about healthy eating and posters remind them of which foods are healthy. However, children cannot freely help themselves to drinks of water when thirsty to avoid dehydration.

Children's needs are considered by appropriate accident, medication and dietary records being shared with parents and carers to ensure that they are fully informed of their children's well-being.

Children have many opportunities to exercise in the fresh air by playing outdoors and enjoying a varied range of physical activities to develop their skills. Children observe weather conditions and know the effect that they can have on their bodies. They are beginning to recognise the importance of physical play and the impact that exercise has on their overall well-being. They make decisions as to whether to play outdoors, where they can practise and refine skills,

co-ordination and balance when using the small climbing frame or caterpillar. Children can successfully negotiate space, while judging speed and distance when pedalling, pushing or scooting wheeled toys. All children are given ample time to perfect new skills and are able to handle tools and to manipulate malleable materials with confidence. Children are given the opportunity to practise tightening and undoing screws and nuts when playing with construction toys.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a safe, secure and welcoming environment. They are able to see their artwork attractively displayed to effectively promote their good self-esteem by knowing that staff value their efforts. There is ample space for children to move around freely and to enjoy choosing from a wide and interesting range of good quality toys. Children use furniture suitable for their age and development to assist them to feel secure and relaxed in the welcoming environment. Children are welcomed into two rooms to ensure that their individual needs are being met. For example, children who are finding it difficult to settle into a large group are individually separated from their main carer in one of the rooms. However, this occasionally means that sessions begin when there are more than 26 children in one room.

Children are able to explore the indoor and outdoor environments freely and safely. Staff daily check that the premises, equipment and resources are safe to prevent children playing with any damaged or broken equipment. Children can move around the premises easily and freely as staff are alert to any possible dangers, for example quickly mopping up water in the cloakroom area to prevent children slipping.

Children fully understand the reasons why they must change into plimsolls or soft shoes. They know that their outdoor shoes are hard and may hurt their friends if they accidentally knock them when playing. Staff plan activities to ensure that children learn about safety awareness from special visitors, for example a police officer, to maintain their interest in learning how to keep themselves safe. During role play, children draw on past experiences, for example leaving a baby with a police officer. Children are able to self-select from a good range of toys and resources, while also learning how to carefully and safely use tools, such as scissors. They learn about fire safety and know the emergency evacuation procedures through staff regularly practising drills with them. Electrical equipment and appropriate fire equipment, such as extinguishers and fire blankets, are regularly checked to ensure in working order to further protect children.

Children are kept safe because staff are very vigilant and have good systems to check the identification of visitors and to ensure the safe arrival and collection of children. Staff's good knowledge of child protection issues ensures that high priority is given to protecting children from harm. Their knowledge of safeguarding children is kept up to date through regular training to further promote children's welfare. They recognize their roles and responsibilities to protect children and know how to implement the pre-school and local child protection procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are very sensitively settled into the pre-school according to their individual needs, with plenty of reassurance from the caring staff team. Children can freely choose from the activities on offer and show enthusiasm in their approach to learning new things and practising more familiar skills. They have many opportunities to build on their natural curiosity as learners by asking questions about what they see, for example talking about weather changes when excitedly watching falling snow. Older children speak confidently about their experiences during group discussions and sensitive staff support younger children to also make contributions. Staff and children work and play alongside each other, for example a staff member at the sand tray holding containers to be filled by children, who then watch as the sand falls through the holes. Younger children's language development is well promoted through spontaneous activities and the good interaction between staff and children, such as sharing a story book. Children are becoming increasingly independent by learning to put on their own coats and shoes. They make decisions about what they would next like to do and whether to play inside or outside for parts of sessions.

Children acquire new knowledge and skills by completing tasks linked to themes and topics, such as looking at a wide range of animals from around the world and comparing the differences between bears. A number of younger children attend the pre-school and staff plan their age-appropriate activities and experiences using the 'Birth to three matters' framework to ensure that their developmental needs are met. However, staff use the same assessment frameworks for all ages of children, resulting in such assessments not meeting all children's individual needs.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There are appropriate curriculum planning systems which follow the stepping stones and the six areas of learning. Staff plan a varied range of activities, which are adapted to suit children of differing ages or who have particular needs. Staff have a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage, but they do not always effectively implement this knowledge to help each child to progress. They use varied and suitable teaching methods for both three and four-year-olds, including interaction with children's play, group times and one to one attention. Children are generally well behaved and know what is expected of them. However, when in a large group, staff do not always gain all the children's attention and sometimes do not extend their learning to enable them to progress, especially in calculation and the linking of letters to sounds. Staff observe what children can do and record their observations in assessment records to help them to plan for their next steps of development.

Children feel safe and secure, while developing a sense of belonging in an environment in which they can predict the shape of the day by looking and referring to time lines and clocks. They show a good attitude to their learning and are keen to participate in activities. They show care and concern for others, for example putting their arms around peers who they had knocked while playing and saying sorry without any prompt from staff. Children are sensitive to others and work well as part of a group when sitting patiently and listening attentively to their peers creating their own group story.

Children are making sound progress in communication, language and literacy by selecting and sharing books and by talking with staff and peers. They listen and respond with enjoyment and attention to stories, confidently repeating and anticipating key events when going on a 'bear hunt'. Older children understand that words have meanings when devising their own stories. Children are learning to recognise their own names when finding their name cards on arrival. They are beginning to make their written marks and some more able children can form letters to write their names. Older children can make letters from construction toys and know their sounds, but there are missed opportunities for them to link sounds to letters. When children write their names or make up their own stories, staff do not consistently encourage them to name the sounds of words by naming and sounding the letters of the alphabet.

Children readily count objects when playing by beginning to use their fingers to represent numbers. Older children are beginning to use one number to name each item when counting, but opportunities to calculate are missed in everyday situations, such as when they were counting how many boys and how many girls were present. Some children are beginning to recognise numerals, particularly those on wall clocks. Children can confidently count up to 10 when walking on the musical line. They understand positional language, such as inside the tunnel, while their sand play encourages them to explore volume and capacity. They can solve problems when sand does not go through holes and can talk about shapes when threading beads to create simple patterns.

Children have many opportunities to develop a positive sense of well-being. They practise and refine their skills, for example using hand-eye co-ordination when using tools to roll and cut play dough. They have varied opportunities to investigate and explore through first hand experiences in an interesting environment when going on walks and collecting natural items, such as worms and ladybirds. Children use information technology and programmable toys to support their learning, but they do not use everyday technology, such as mobile phones and keyboards, in their role play situations to enable them to practise and refine skills.

Children are learning to use their senses to explore and experiment with ideas, materials and activities. They engage to act out real experiences and imaginary scenarios in the role play area, which is changed regularly to provide them with different experiences. However, children cannot put themselves fully into the character of a doctor or police officer without a range of materials, such as pencils and paper, to enable them to write for a purpose in role play situations. Children enjoy a wide range of creative activities, such as free painting and collage work. They can try out a range of tools to realise their purpose, such as why glue and a spreader are used to join things together. They have many opportunities to use their imagination and to explore different colours and textures when making two and three dimensional animals. They enjoy listening to guitar music and joining in with simple songs and rhymes. They readily join in the 'bear hunt' story and use their imagination to act out walking through 'squishy mud' and 'deep, dark forest'.

Children are making sound progress towards the early learning goals by staff using systems to plan, record and assess. Children have ample time to explore ideas and interests in depth through staff planning a varied range of achievable activities, although sometimes the more able children are not fully challenged in calculation and the linking of letters to sounds.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are developing a good sense of belonging to the pre-school by hanging their coats on their named coat pegs before self-registering by finding their names. They are encouraged to say goodbye to their parents or carers as they leave to help them to develop secure and trusting relationships with staff.

All children are made to feel valued and treated with respect to help them to feel confident and good about themselves. They have positive attitudes and are encouraged to develop by their achievements being rewarded with a popular sticker system. They are beginning to develop an understanding of people's similarities and differences through being able to see a wide range of positive images and by playing with toys and resources reflecting diversity. Children take part in celebrating other cultural events, for example tasting Indian food when learning about Diwali and making collage daffodils to celebrate St. David's Day. They are learning alternative communication skills, such as makaton, to enable them to have a good understanding of how to communicate with others when playing and solving problems together.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language are effectively supported by good systems within the pre-school. Staff work with parents and carers and other agencies to plan activities to ensure that all children can take part at a level appropriate to their needs. The managers co-ordinate the sharing of information to enable all staff to meet the individual needs of children and to plan for their ongoing progress.

Children understand responsible behaviour and are learning about boundaries and expectations. They are developing an understanding of how their behaviour affects others by immediately apologising when accidentally knocking each other. Children enjoy taking responsibility for tasks within the setting, knowing that when the big hand on the clock points to six and staff switch the light off and on, they will have group time if they eagerly help to tidy away toys. They are given lots of praise and encouragement, resulting in them generally being well-behaved, polite and helpful. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

There are good working relationships with staff, parents and carers, who can speak to staff at any time to discuss concerns about their child's welfare and development. Parents and carers have access to a varied range of information from a table, for example the operational plan detailing policies and procedures and many information leaflets regarding children's health and welfare. Staff organise 'parent line' workshops, such as 'understanding children's behaviour' and 'transition into school'. If parents and carers request, staff complete a daily communication book, while notices on the entrance door inform them of the main learning topics. Staff welcome parents and carers into the setting at any time and encourage a two-way flow of communication for the benefit of children.

Partnership with parents and carers of funded children is satisfactory. Older children regularly take home a library book and staff prepare activity folders for parents and carers to borrow to enable them to help their children learn at home. Children's individual development files are available for parents and carers to see at any time and they also receive end of pre-school reports on their children's progress. Planning is displayed on the walls, but some parents and

carers have very little understanding of the Foundation Stage. They do not understand that their children are on a journey to help them to make progress towards the early learning goals, resulting in them not contributing to their child's development records to help staff to plan for their next steps.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are protected and their welfare promoted, because there are appropriate systems to ensure that adults working with the children are suitable to do so. Staff induction procedures include such matters as evacuation procedures, child protection procedures and health and safety issues to ensure that new staff know how to always act in children's best interests.

Children generally move freely between the rooms and the outdoors to enrich their different experiences. However, the learning outcomes for children are not always fully maximised because on occasions group sizes exceed 26 children, resulting in their needs not being effectively met and their interest not always being maintained.

Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed to ensure the safe management of the pre-school. The majority of the required documentation for the safe day-to-day management of the pre-school is maintained to promote children's welfare and care.

Leadership and management of the funded nursery education is satisfactory. The management team is responsive to the needs of children, parents and staff. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities in developing children's learning. The management team evaluates children's strengths and weaknesses, but has not yet sought such information from parents and carers to ensure that they are fully involved in their children's learning. The staff team knows what works with particular children, especially those with learning difficulties or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. Regular staff meetings support the delivery of the Foundation Stage. The management team and staff are positive in their approach and work hard to achieve constant improvement and results with the children.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the registered provider was asked to develop the children's use of the outdoor area, to provide warm, suitable flooring for children to sit and play on and to review the organisation of snack time to enable children to be more independent in pouring, sharing out and calculating and to enable staff to be positive role models for children's behaviour and language skills.

Children now regularly use the outdoor area following a soft safety surface being laid over part of the garden and the purchase of more outdoor play provision. The garden area is now included in daily planning to enable children to benefit from plenty of physical exercise in the fresh air and to promote their good health. Children now have comfortable flooring on which to sit and to rest quietly following staff creating a cosy book area. They are now encouraged to be

independent at snack times following the introduction of a milk bar, for example by putting their straws into cartons of milk and by helping themselves to snacks from the table. Staff are positive role models for children when sitting and talking or reading to them to develop language skills.

At the last nursery education inspection, there were two key issues. The registered provider was asked to plan the use of space and time so that staff may more effectively challenge and extend older/more able children's learning. The registered provider was also asked to allow children to initiate and develop their play for longer periods of time in activities that they have chosen to suit their stage of development and learning preferences.

Children now initiate and develop their own play for longer periods of time in their chosen activities following the majority of morning sessions being set aside for free play to enable them to follow their learning preferences. The more structured afternoon sessions still allow children time for free choice. Following a review of the planning of sessions, staff now display planning on the wall including how the older and more able children will be challenged. However, more able children are still not being fully challenged at all activities, especially calculation and the linking of letters to sounds.

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):

- request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment
- ensure that fresh drinking water is available to children at all times

- ensure that group sizes never exceed 26 children.

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):

- provide more opportunities for children to write for a purpose, to link letters to sounds and to practise calculation during everyday experiences and activities
- improve systems as to how parents and carers are informed about the Foundation Stage and the stepping stones to enable them to make a greater contribution to their children's assessment records and next steps.

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