



Rainbow Pre-School (Kettering)

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	220018
Inspection date	23 March 2007
Inspector	Susan Marriott
Setting Address	Millbrook Centre, Churchill Way, Kettering, Northamptonshire, NN15 5BZ
Telephone number	01536 510461
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Registered person	Rainbow Pre School (Kettering)
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 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?

Rainbow Pre-school opened in 1974. It is managed by a committee of parents and operates from a mobile building on the site of the Millbrook Community Centre in the Ise Lodge area of Kettering. The group use the main room, kitchen, toilets and storage areas. There is no useable outside play area. The pre-school opens five mornings a week from 09:00 to 11:30, and five afternoons from 12:30 to 15:00, during term time only. Children attend a variety of sessions each week. Five of the sessions, two afternoons and three mornings are for children in their pre-school year.

There are currently 66 children aged from two years and six months to under five-years-old on roll. Of these, 40 children receive funding for Nursery Education. The setting makes provision for children who may have learning difficulties or disabilities and for those who speak English as an additional language. The pre-school employs seven staff. Of these, six hold appropriate

early years qualifications. The pre-school is affiliated to the Pre-School Learning Alliance and receives support from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children stay healthy because staff follow generally effective health and hygiene policies and procedures. Sick children are excluded from the provision to minimise the spread of infection. The premises are maintained in a properly clean state. Children wash their hands before snack and after visiting the toilet. Children use paper towels to dry their hands and limit the spread of infection and liquid soap is always available. However, children do not always remember the reasons behind these practices because staff do not necessarily reinforce earlier learning about germs and healthy eating through routine discussion. Children receive appropriate treatment in medical emergency because staff hold suitable first aid qualifications. The first aid box is accessible and the contents are checked regularly. Staff record accidents, obtain parental signatures and include the relevant details.

An extensive range of foods such as fruit, vegetables and bread products are presented for the children at a group snack table system. Preparation is done in the kitchen out of sight of the children. Staff sit with a group of children and talk about everyday events. This removes an opportunity to develop more detailed conversations about the food. Children have the choice of fruit juice, milk or water, but staff pour this for them, removing the opportunity to increase further levels of independence at snack time. Children may become thirsty whilst playing because a jug of water and cups is not clearly visible and is not easily accessible by children themselves.

All the children enjoy basic daily indoor activities, which enable them to develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills. For example, children practise their co-ordination as they aim small balls into a basketball net. The children develop their large muscle movements as they climb on a small wooden cube and slide down the ramp. However the equipment lacks any real challenge for the older and more able children attending the session, compromising the quality of play and learning. The setting does have more challenging equipment, but this is heavy and difficult to set out and pack away on a regular basis. The pre-school has no outdoor area and issues resulting from the recent re-organisation of opening hours, mean that the infant school playground is not being used and children do not regularly gain access to fresh air during the playgroup session.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff give excellent priority to the security of the premises and the supervision of the children. Staff are alert to strangers entering the car park and promptly attend the locked entrance doors. Visitors must show their identity documentation and sign the visitor book. This system protects children from un-vetted persons entering the premises unescorted and ensures that access to the children is suitably monitored. Staff carry out evacuation drills with sufficient frequency to ensure the safety of the children and staff. Daily risk assessments are completed

and these are documented. Children are safe in the setting because staff are appropriately vigilant and take precautionary action to prevent accidents. For example, a member of staff ensures that the slide ramp is stacked behind tables where it cannot fall on top of anyone.

Children are warmly welcomed by the friendly staff and well-cared for in a pleasant, suitably safe and secure indoor environment. There is currently no outdoor play area. Although the pre-school is the main user of the premises, staff have to set out equipment and clear away at the end of some sessions, because the hall is sometimes used by other community groups. Equipment and resources are not stored efficiently and children choose from the pre-selection made by staff on a daily basis. This rather limits children's ability to make independent choices in some areas of learning. The room is set out with activities relating to the six areas of learning and a book area is made inviting to children with soft play blocks.

Children's welfare is adequately safeguarded because they are protected by informed adults who are aware of current child protection policies and procedures in line with those of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Staff have not attended any recent update training but have relevant literature to which they can refer in the event of a concern arising.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The friendly staff work well together as a team. They follow children to the activities which attract their interest and provide highly effective support to draw learning from play. This promotes children's welfare, learning and play. Staff provide positive role models and give sensitive support to all children. They demonstrate a genuine affection for children and clearly enjoy their company. Children are happy, settle quickly and relate well to other children and staff. Staff have attended training relating to the 'Birth to three matters' framework and incorporate this on their session plans to underpin the foundations of the educational programme for the under three-year-olds. Younger children happily play together, and are beginning to take turns, share and to talk to others. They experiment with crayons, pencils and chalk, and explore sand, paint and dough.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making steady progress towards the early learning goals given their ages and starting points. Staff engage with children at the activities of their choice and they get down to the children's level to make eye contact and interact in a lively manner to draw the learning from play. Staff work well as a team to prepare toys and equipment in advance and mostly achieve a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff have a competent knowledge of the Foundation Stage and plan to provide an overall balance across all six areas of learning. However, there are a few minor gaps in the programme, with less emphasis being given to calculation and shape, space and measure in the programme for mathematical development. Letters and numbers are not given a high profile in the environment. Some physical play activities lack sufficient challenge to progress the learning of some children.

Long and medium term planning reflects the curriculum guidance and weekly plans identify clear learning intentions, identified from a wide range of stepping stones and the early learning goals. This ensures a purposeful focus to secure and progress children's learning. Staff make highly detailed and conscientious observations of children's achievement, supported by narrative and photographic evidence. However, achievements are not always appropriately referenced to the stepping stones and the system does not facilitate tracking children's progress through the stepping stones. Nevertheless, rigorous assessment of what children know and can do feeds into planning in a logical way to inform the next steps in individual children's learning.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is nurtured well. Children enjoy the activities on offer, and are beginning to concentrate and persevere well to complete tasks. Staff positively encourage children to share and support play effectively to achieve this. For example, when a dispute breaks out over a buggy, staff intervene to ensure 'fair play'. The staff praise the children for their achievements which reinforces children's self-esteem and confidence. Staff make generally good use of books and story time. There is limited use of a wide range of strategies to encourage early reading, writing or recognition of letters and the sounds they represent. Children have plentiful opportunities to count. For example, children count independently up to 13 when playing the ladybird game. They count the spots and recognise the card which matches the dice.

A good range of activities to support knowledge and understanding include daily opportunities to explore and investigate sand, water, paint and chalk. Children enjoy small world play, construction and access to information technology. Plans show that cultural festivals such as Diwali and Chinese New Year are acknowledged through activities at the craft table and different foods at snack time. Children's physical development is supported daily through indoor provision in the centre of the playroom, but children do not gain regular access to fresh air during the session. Although activities are planned to support children's creative development, some of these are rather over-directed by adults. Children complete tasks such as sticking pre-cut squares of pink material onto a pre-cut pig shape or making a daffodil to a pre-determined end product, using pre-cut shapes and adult controlled colours. The setting is attempting to balance this formal approach to art and crafts, with the provision of resources such as scissors, glue and paper for children to freely experiment and express their own ideas.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children from the local community are warmly welcomed and included in all activities. Toys, books and equipment reflect some positive images. Some activities are planned to highlight festivals and themes around the world such as Chinese New Year. These help to increase children's awareness of other cultures and help the children to begin to develop a positive attitude to others.

Children who have varying needs receive suitable support. Children who may have learning difficulties receive appropriate intervention and referrals to suitable professionals outside the provision. Staff provide positive role models for children by being calm and polite. Staff praise children frequently, ensuring that they develop confidence and self-esteem and understand when they have done well. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff build positive partnerships with parents to support children's progress in learning. The setting is aware of new legislation issued October 2005, regarding the complaints process. The group provides lots of information in the entrance area for parents including general care and basic information about the educational programme. Regular consultation meetings are held each term so that parents and carers can share information with staff, discuss their child's progress and see their child's assessment records. This two-way sharing benefits the child and enhances their learning. The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is satisfactory.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Positive outcomes are promoted for children through the generally effective organisation of the setting because free flow play is promoted throughout the morning and children have plenty of opportunity for uninterrupted activities, completed in their own time. The joint supervisors, staff and committee work together, persevering to maintain the service to the community. For example, the group is planning to relocate to new premises. All staff hold appropriate clearances, and most are well-qualified in early years practice. This secures a consistently good quality of teaching which effectively supports the implementation of the programme for learning. The system for recording children's attendance is manageable and accurately reflects the numbers of children on the premises. This ensures children's safety in an emergency situation. Group sizes and staff deployment contribute positively to children's good health, safety, enjoyment and achievement and ability to take an active part in the setting. A comprehensive set of policies and procedures are continually reviewed and updated to reflect the daily practice of the group.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The two joint supervisors work well together, sharing the responsibility of the under three-year-olds and the Rising Fives, and working alongside each other to ensure continuity of care for children. Staff are receptive to ideas and suggestions and have the confidence to experiment with planning systems to find out what works for them. They are beginning to use the self-evaluation form to effectively monitor and evaluate their practice. This does not currently extend to an evaluation of the educational provision, in order to improve the quality and standards of teaching and learning. Taken overall, the provision meets the needs of all children.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection of day care, two recommendations were raised. The setting was asked to develop staff's awareness and understanding of effective ways to manage children's behaviour and to ensure that appropriate activities are provided for the older age group.

Staff have attended training courses on behaviour management techniques which have provided them with a range of appropriate strategies to challenge children's unwanted behaviours, taking into account their age and stage of development. The pre-school divides the weekly sessions into those for under three-year-olds and those for 'Rising Fives' and continue to develop differentiated activities to ensure that everyday routines and activities are used to help develop children's independence skills.

Following the previous inspection of nursery education, two key issues were identified and raised with the provider. The pre-school was required to review planning to ensure that everyone is aware of the purpose of activities and can promote children's learning effectively, and to reconsider the organisation of sessions so that children's interest is sustained, involvement levels are improved and children's independence is promoted.

The staff have colour coded planning systems which identify specific learning intentions so that staff are clear about what a child is intended to gain from each activity. Plans support staff in their work to continue to engage children's interest, promote concentration and develop further, children's independence and choice.

They ensure that available resources are used effectively to support children's learning.

The staff have made satisfactory progress with the issues raised and continue to work towards these goals. The action taken has improved the quality and standards of care and education for children.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that require the provider 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 that fresh drinking water is always available to 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):

- continue to develop snack time as an integrated learning experience for children and ensure that the programme for physical development provides appropriate levels of challenge for the older and more able children
- extend the system to enable children's progress to be tracked against the stepping stones, ensuring that observations of children's achievements are appropriately referenced to the stepping stones. Give increased emphasis on the plans to the areas of learning where there are identified weaknesses
- extend the system for monitoring and evaluating the quality and standards of the provision to include the nursery education.

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