

Raunds Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 220285
Inspection date 23 May 2007
Inspector Susan Marriott

Setting Address 2 Poplars Close, Poplars Close, Raunds, Northants, NN9 6EZ

Telephone number 01933 461900

E-mail

Registered person Peggy Bellamy

Type of inspection Integrated

Type of care Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

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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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Raunds Day Nursery opened in 1996 and is privately owned. It operates from purpose-built accommodation adjacent to the owner's premises in Raunds, Northamptonshire. There are two inter-linked teaching areas, each with toilet provision. One is for the two to three-year-olds and the other for the three to five-year-olds. There is a safely enclosed outdoor garden with a covered paved area and a larger play area surfaced with wood chips.

The nursery is open between 07.30 and 17.30 weekdays, all year round except for Bank Holidays. Full and part-time sessions are offered. The nursery also operates a before and after school hours service as well as holiday provision for children who have previously attended the nursery.

A maximum of 40 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 47 children on roll and of these, 32 receive funding for nursery education. The nursery is able to support a number of children with learning difficulties or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. The children mainly come from the local and surrounding areas.

Nine staff work with the children throughout the week. All hold appropriate childcare qualifications. The nursery receives input from the local authority. The nursery is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance, and has good links with the local school.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Exemplary practice is underpinned by plans which refer to the 'Healthy Child' aspect of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. For example, young children eat their snack within sight of a display board promoting 'Five fruit and vegetables a day' so that staff can actively promote awareness of healthy choices from an early age. Children stay healthy because the staff adhere to clear, extremely well-structured health and safety procedures, which are consistently applied to prevent the spread of infection. Staff provide excellent role models to the children on hygiene practice. Staff consistently weave learning about germs and personal hygiene into the daily routine so that it becomes second nature to children. For example, some children no longer need to be reminded to wash their hands before snack and after visiting the toilet. Staff gently prompt younger children about wiping their noses and encourage children to learn appropriate etiquette, putting their hands to their mouths when coughing and sneezing. Children can access tissues easily and a bin for disposing of the soiled article is provided nearby. Staff explain to children the reasons why they need to wear sun hats and sun cream in hot weather; and coats, hats and gloves in cold weather. Children learn to dress appropriately for their chosen activities. For example, children understand that they need to fetch their sun hat when playing outside in the sunshine.

Sick children are excluded from the provision to minimise the spread of infection and the premises are maintained in a properly clean state. Tables are regularly sprayed with anti-bacterial spray to prevent cross contamination. Children receive appropriate treatment in medical emergency because most staff hold suitable and current first aid qualifications. The first aid box is accessible and the contents are checked regularly. Staff record accidents appropriately, include the relevant details and monitor these rigorously as part of the risk assessment process.

The nursery has now obtained the Northamptonshire Heartbeat Award and continues to participate in the annual programme, with children currently benefiting from the consequent focus upon the healthy living. Staff positively promote the health benefits of eating fruit and vegetables and reinforce learning by encouraging use of the growing patches in the garden and positive role play. Children do not become thirsty because they have constant access to named water bottles during the day. Children choose when they would like their snack. Milk or water is available and children serve themselves, showing good hand-eye co-ordination and pouring skills. A generous choice of foods such as tomato, cucumber, cheese, apple and buttered crumpets is available for children at snack time. Meals are prepared on the premises from fresh ingredients and staff are vigilant regarding allergies and dietary requirements. Children are gathered in the library area after lunch for stories, rhymes and gentle chatter with staff. This creates a pleasant and relaxing atmosphere and children needing to rest can sleep on a bed or cushions in the book area.

The outdoor area has been recently developed to provide a delightful and stimulating outdoor learning environment which is akin to an Aladdin's Cave for children. They become totally absorbed in a vast range of versatile learning opportunities which cover all areas of the curriculum. Children thrive as they enjoy an extensive range of physical activities and have

regular opportunities for fresh air and exercise. Children can choose whether to play indoors or out and enjoy varied and challenging activities, which enable them to develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills. Children dig, plant and harvest during the growing season and when the growing beds are empty, they enjoy digging in the compost. Children draw on the blackboard with large chalks learning how to control their large arm muscle movements. They climb, jump and balance on a versatile range of equipment. Children enjoy occasional visits to the nearby field where they practise hand-eye coordination with a wide range of small equipment bats and balls, footballs, hoops and bean bags. Children delight in music and movement sessions where they dance and stretch to taped music. Their finer manipulative skills and control are actively encouraged through interesting craft activities.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

This well-run and effectively monitored nursery gives high priority to children's safety and welfare. Security systems are robust and thorough and focussed risk assessments ensure a safe environment. The nursery is accessed through a secure door, monitored by closed circuit television. Every unknown adult is required to produce an identity document before being admitted to the premises and staff rigorously record all visitors to the setting. Every courtesy is extended to visitors with regard to safety. For example, staff point out the emergency procedures and the assembly point. All the usual safety measures are in place, such as heater guards and door hooks to prevent trapped fingers.

Staff help keep children safe in the nursery and on outings because they fully understand and comply with health and safety requirements. Supervision is exceptional. For example, generous adult to child ratios allow flexibility in preparing and organising activities and the environment. Before outside play, the staff fully prepare the garden for the children and complete their risk assessment. This supports the free-flow garden access and ensures that children can move from one activity to another without having to wait. Staff support children well and meet their individual needs. Staff know what to do in the event of an emergency and practise their evacuation plan with suitable frequency to ensure the safety of the children. Children learn to keep themselves safe in the setting because staff give good explanations as to why, for example, a child must not walk across the wet floor.

Children are genuinely and warmly welcomed and well-cared for in an extremely attractive, purpose-designed and suitably safe and secure indoor and outdoor environment. Staff set the room out thoughtfully to facilitate children's choice and developing independence. The range of resources is extensive and innovative storage solutions mean that everything is arranged to facilitate children's independent access wherever possible. For example, heuristic play materials are stored in laundry baskets and other sensorial equipment is kept tidy in cloth drawstring bags hanging on the wall. Equipment and resources are safely stored and clearly labelled so that children and staff can access them easily. The staff put up posters and pictures to make the room attractive for children and set out the equipment enticingly before the children arrive. Bright displays of children's work enhance the environment and reinforce and consolidate topical learning in an age-appropriate manner. Interactive labelling of displays ensures that print is given good prominence in the environment and provides effective support for children's emergent reading skills.

Children's welfare is robustly safeguarded because they are protected by trained, informed adults who understand current child protection policies and procedures in line with those of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Strong recruitment and induction procedures ensure

that adults are suitable to work with children. This includes experience, training and vetting checks. Children remain the primary focus of care in this well-organised and managed setting and comprehensive recording of pre-existing injuries, protect the children and staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children enjoy and make rapid progress in learning, leisure and personal development because the staff are confident, enthusiastic, highly skilled and knowledgeable in their childcare practice. This is an exciting nursery for children. A busy noise pervades the overwhelmingly positive atmosphere and confident and secure children learn rapidly from challenging experiences whilst having fun. Staff are constantly inventing new activities and exploiting every opportunity to nurture children's imagination through a rich variety of role play. Children become inquisitive and motivated, independent learners as they explore the wealth of experiences presented to them. Staff provide positive role models for children and give sensitive support to all children. Children are happy, settle quickly and relate well to other children and staff. Staff encourage and build children's vocabulary through constant praise and recognition as they support play. They skilfully adapt their level of language and questioning to reflect each child's stage of development. For example, a staff member speaks slowly and clearly to a two-year-old and turns to answer a four-year old in noticeably more complex sentences. This helps them to meet the needs of all children. Staff confidently implement the four aspects of the 'Birth to three matters' guidance and actively use this framework as the basis for their planning and assessment for children under three-years-old. Children make excellent progress in the development of their language skills because of the positive interaction and staff engagement in conversations and play.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. The staff team deploy themselves to support children's learning with sensitivity and respect. They demonstrate an exceptionally competent knowledge of the Foundation Stage and deliver a superb and varied programme of play-based activities which provide a clear balance across all six areas of learning. Children are making outstanding and rapid progress towards the early learning goals. By the time they go to school they are ready, well-prepared and confident to accept the transition to their new environment. Exchange visits between school and the nursery actively support this process. Children respond to new activities and challenge with lively interest. They enthusiastically select, explore and investigate the vast range of interesting play activities and show high levels of curiosity as they play at the interactive water gullies mounted on the garden fencing. Children are fascinated as they observe the water flow between the funnels. Staff make suggestions to extend learning. For example, they say 'I wonder what might happen if you pour the water into that funnel? Let's see what happens'. Younger children play in the coloured water tray. When the sunshine becomes too strong and staff decide that the children must come inside for a while, the water tray is brought inside so that play can continue uninterrupted.

An extremely flexible and child-centred approach to planning and an excellent balance between adult and child-led activities allows children to learn at their own pace. Planning is highly effective because the staff have ownership of their system. Additional plans show extra activities that children can select and develop with staff support as required. Staff are keenly aware of how individual children learn and skilfully adapt activities to build on children's interests and spontaneous events. For example, a parent and grandparent offer to bring some one-week-old ducklings into the nursery. The children gaze in awe and wonder as the tiny creatures

immediately jump into a container of water placed in the pen and begin to swim about. A distinct feature of the nursery is the rich quality of staff interaction with children. For example, they discuss how the ducklings swim on water within the first hour of hatching and how the ducklings communicate with one another whilst still in their shell. During the afternoon, staff offer children the opportunity to consolidate their learning through an open-ended art activity where children are invited to create their own picture about the duckling visit. Staff speak in clear sentences, introducing new vocabulary to the children and explaining about the possible choices of collage material for the pictures. Staff use stimulating language such as 'soft', 'silky' and 'smooth' and ask some of the older children if they had noticed what sound in the alphabet all those words begin with. This shows how staff skilfully differentiate their teaching to meet the needs of children at differing ages or stages of development and those who learn more quickly or more slowly.

Staff recognise that children need to select their own activities as their learning experience is far more involved if they are self-motivated to learn. Staff know that free choice helps independence and concentration levels and ensure that the majority of the key experiences are open-ended to allow children the time to experiment and continually develop and progress towards the early learning goals. They provide learning experiences indoors and out and consistently evaluate the level of interest children show in the different areas of the nursery through monitoring their own movements around the playrooms and garden. This prompts staff to continually review their provision, injecting increased quality and interest factor into these activities. This ensures that children enjoy learning through relevant, first-hand experiences of high quality. Staff aim to widen children's cultural experiences and knowledge of the natural world through the interest table which is supported by books both fiction and non fiction.

Snack time is superbly managed and a highly effective learning time for children, promoting literacy, numeracy, social skills and independence. Children independently access the snack bar on a self-registration basis. Some children choose to have snack together and clearly know the routine. They demonstrate an outstanding level of independence as they pour their own drinks, and share the plates between them. They put their cups in the washing bowl on the table and place any peel or waste fruit in the bin. The children register their names on the list to say they have had their snack. Staff provide relevant books and pictures at the snack table to encourage children to make links between their experiences and what they see in books. For example, during the inspection children notice the pictures of an apple cut in half. This sparks a discussion about different colours of apples and an exploration of the correct vocabulary for 'core', 'pip' and 'peel'.

Staff use clear and highly skilled teaching techniques which they confidently adapt to suit the various ages of children at this setting. Children enjoy good, trusting relationships with staff who get down to their level and engage in meaningful questioning, conversation and discussion which develops learning through play. Excellent priority is given to the development of children's speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. During each session children sit for a story, sing songs, talk about the rules or have a discussion about what the children did on holiday or some other similar event. Children sit quietly at this time, learn to listen and join in with songs including rhyming, numbers and counting, colours, alliteration, and joining in with repetitive refrains. They play musical instruments to some songs and use instruments to pick out the beat. Children share books with staff and their contributions are valued and affirmed during the activity.

Plans and observations show that children learn about numbers, use mathematical language and solve simple problems through practical and meaningful everyday experiences. Children

access child-sized photograph albums packed with photographs which help them to recall shared experiences and to develop a sense of time and place. For example, children become animated and enthusiastic about their previous 'Forest School' experiences as they study the pictures one after the other. With a marked awareness of co-operation and social awareness, the children talked to inspectors about cooking popcorn safely on a camp-fire and making shelters for woodland animals.

Staff rigorously observe children in their play and interact at opportune moments to extend children's learning. They gather baseline information on entry to the provision. They make notes on a daily basis of children's stages of development and ensure that plans incorporate strategies for helping children with any particular difficulties in a particular area of learning. They plan the progression of learning for other areas as they acknowledge that children will often re-visit the same key learning experience time after time. Conscientiously kept assessment folders are based upon dated observations, arranged under the six areas of learning and parents and carers make their own contributions. The system enables children's progress to be tracked easily against the 'Birth to three matter' and the stepping stones. Therefore, assessment is fully effective in securing children's progression in learning and informing the next steps in the learning programme.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children become highly motivated, independent learners who develop an exemplary awareness of others and this helps them to join in, take responsibility and play a truly productive part in the setting. Highly effective planning of experiences and activities helps children to develop their personal and social skills. One of the primary aims of the Forest School is to build and develop children's confidence, self-esteem and motivation through the outdoor experience. Children relish the opportunity to take part in activities that develop their understanding of their own and other cultures. The nursery draws upon the expertise of their parent group for information and guidance about traditions beyond their usual experience. For example, displays prompt a discussion about the children's recent experience of Songkran Day, the Thai water festival. Staff and children dressed in yellow and had a water and talcum powder fight. They all enjoyed tasting Thai foods. Closer to home, a display decorated with Union Jack flags, features red tissue paper roses made by children to commemorate St George's Day and their pictures about the story of George and the Dragon. Staff make sure that children are provided with a wide range of anti-discriminatory and anti-bias play materials and resources which promote a growing awareness of others. Children learn about different lifestyles, disabilities and cultural practices which means that children's awareness of the wider world is actively promoted and enables them to develop a positive attitude to others. Staff work well with professionals and parents to make sure that all families are fully welcomed into the nursery. Children who may have learning difficulties receive appropriate intervention and referrals to suitable professionals outside the provision.

Staff provide excellent role models for children by being calm and polite. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and praise children freely, ensuring that they develop confidence and self-esteem and understand when they have done well. Therefore, children are well-behaved in response to the consistent expectations of caring staff. Behaviour within the setting is consistently of a high standard as children of all ages have a mature understanding of right and wrong. Children frequently manage any minor conflicts with great success. For example, two children meet on the narrow garden path. One is riding a bike and another has a pram with a dolly. They spontaneously negotiate with each other to enable each to pass the

other and say 'thank you' when the manoeuvre is completed. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural is fostered.

The first visit to the nursery is the starting point of the staff and family working together to share information about cultures, home languages, interests and specific needs. Staff give a generous amount of time to new enquirers and ensure that parents and carers have ample opportunity to become familiar with the setting. There is a wealth of information which is easily accessible which includes general care and educational literature. Parents are warmly welcomed into the provision and are well-supported by staff during the settling-in process. Parents value the openness and honesty of staff. This supports the appropriate sharing of information in sensitive situations. Parents are highly complimentary about the level of service provided. Staff encourage parents to actively contribute towards individual assessment records. Therefore, children benefit from a two-way sharing of information between parents and staff to enhance their learning. This underpins their progress in the nursery and consequently their ability to fully contribute to the provision. The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is outstanding.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children's care, learning and welfare is significantly enhanced by exceptional organisation. All required documentation is in place and readily accessible, registration systems are suitably robust and well-thought out procedures ensure the efficient and safe management of the nursery. Regularly reviewed and amended, comprehensive policies and procedures underpin excellent professional practice. The loyal and hard-working staff team are well-qualified and dedicated to the concept of quality childcare and education. They demonstrate a genuine commitment to on-going training to continually update their skills, knowledge and ability to meet the children's needs effectively. Staff follow children to the activities which engage their interest and provide consistently and effective support to draw the learning from play. This promotes highly positive outcomes for children.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is outstanding. The staff team are well-supported by the actively involved proprietor and a nominated parent monitor who oversee the management of the nursery. The manager is extremely well-organised and has attended many management training courses. She works alongside her staff and therefore has a true 'hands on approach' to every aspect of the nursery operation. The manager is fully committed to ensuring that all children receive the highest quality of care and education. She actively encourages all staff to constantly review and monitor their practice, through regular supervision meetings, personal development plans and annual appraisals. This motivates staff and contributes to the dynamic ethos of the whole team. The manager shares her expert practice with the staff who all work together to ensure that teaching methods take full account of the children's individual needs and the diverse ways in which children learn. The high-quality training programme is carefully planned to meet the individual and collective needs of staff. This ensures that staff are able to deliver a highly successfully early education programme for all children.

The manager has a clear vision for the continued development of the setting and ensures that everyone involved has clearly designated roles and responsibilities. Staff are able to give their time and energy to the children who enjoy their time at this friendly and welcoming provision. The staff have ownership of their planning and assessment systems, which are manageable and achievable and thereby secure and progress children's learning. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection of day care, one recommendation was raised which was immediately addressed by the nursery. Staff now ensure that they request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment. This has improved children's welfare in an emergency situation.

At the last inspection of nursery education, two issues were raised to improve the quality and standards of the provision. The nursery was asked to improve the scope children have to use their imaginations and to provide more opportunities for children to use the resources and equipment outside.

Many exciting and innovative initiatives have been implemented to address these issues. The garden area has been transformed, a free-flow play system introduced, and a library and computer room created. Children under three-years-old now have access to heuristic play and exciting treasure boxes. A continuous and dynamic programme of constant improvement over recent years has led to the sustained extension and support of children's learning in all areas of the curriculum.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required 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.

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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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