



Rainbow Under 5s Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY299296
Inspection date	17 January 2007
Inspector	Anne Legge
Setting Address	Axminster Community Primary School, Stoney Lane, Axminster, Devon, EX13 5BU
Telephone number	01297 33005
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Registered person	Rainbow Under 5s Playgroup
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Rainbow Under 5s Playgroup is a committee-run group, which has been registered in its current premises since 2005. It is situated within the grounds of Axminster Community Primary School. The playgroup has sole use of a mobile classroom known as 'the unit'. This consists of a main playroom set up to provide separate areas for play, with adjoining toilet facilities. A fully enclosed outdoor play area is available, and the playgroup also has shared use of the school playground. The group is open on weekdays in term-time from 09:10 until 12:00. It is registered to provide care for up to 20 children, aged from three to five years. There are currently 26 children on the register, including 25 funded three- and four-year-olds. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities are welcomed and supported.

The playgroup employs five members of staff, all of whom have appropriate child care qualifications. Support and curriculum advice are sought from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit from healthy eating, as they enjoy nutritious snacks, including plenty of fresh and dried fruit, and savoury items, such as cheese or crackers. Snacks are very attractively served and a café system is used, so that children can choose for themselves when they eat. Fresh drinking water is constantly available to children, and all special dietary needs are known and met. Children have daily opportunities to be physically active. In good weather, they play outdoors, using wheeled toys, climbing equipment or bats and balls. They enjoy walks around the school site in all weathers and regularly use the indoor space for active games or moving to music.

Children are very well protected from infection. The premises are spotlessly clean and staff are meticulous in cleaning surfaces, especially before children eat from them. Staff wear aprons when preparing and serving snacks, and carefully wash their hands before handling food. Children learn very good routines regarding hand washing. Staff remind them to wash their hands appropriately, and notices above wash basins also serve as reminders. Children's care is consistent when they are unwell or injured. Two staff have current first aid qualifications and four are booked on courses to renew their qualifications. Records of accidents and medication are comprehensive and shared appropriately with parents.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. Their security is assured, as the door is locked during sessions and the fire exit is alarmed, to warn staff if children open it. The outdoor play area is completely enclosed and staff effectively monitor access to the site. Children choose from a very good variety of toys and resources, which are appropriate for their ages and stored at low levels, so that they can access them safely. There are effective systems for regularly checking all toys and resources for damage and cleanliness, so that children can use them without risk.

Children's safety is given a high priority within the playgroup. Staff demonstrate a clear understanding of all safety issues and regularly risk assess the premises and activities. They carry out weekly risk assessments, based on activity plans, ensuring that all risks are identified and well-managed. For example, all outings and the use of tools, sand and water are carefully risk assessed. A committee member also risk assesses the premises regularly and ensures that identified actions are completed. Fire guards, socket covers and cupboard locks are all used, to protect children from harm. Clear evacuation procedures and regular fire drills ensure that children and staff know the routine in emergencies and are able to respond quickly.

Children learn to be aware of their own safety, as staff remind them, for example, how to carry scissors or how to behave when out walking. They are very well protected from abuse or neglect, as staff have all completed training in issues relating to safeguarding children, and have a clear

understanding of the procedures to follow. The manager is also committed to further training, to extend her understanding of child protection issues and procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy an excellent variety of activities. Sessions include a very good balance of free play and structured tasks, which effectively promote children's development. They are keen to attend the group and engage enthusiastically in their play, throughout sessions. They display excellent concentration at their chosen tasks, and in well-planned adult-led activities.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a very good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and plan themes and activities, which cover the whole curriculum over time. They regularly observe children's achievements and carefully track their progress towards the early learning goals, using this information very effectively, to plan for the next steps in each child's development. They skilfully extend children's thinking and help them to learn new skills, as they use questions and discussion, or enthusiastically join in with their play.

Children talk very confidently, as they describe their favourite thing, at circle time. They develop a good understanding of letter sounds and shapes, through daily activities, such as when discussing letters in their names. They enjoy stories and use the book area very well, choosing to share texts with their friends or with staff. They recognise and begin to write their names, with good adult support. They enjoy making marks and writing for different purposes, such as when making books or lists. Children count throughout sessions, and able children are very well extended, as they regularly compare groups of objects, or discuss one more or less. For example, they count pieces of fruit on their plate and discuss how many will be left, when some are eaten. They sing number songs and use very good resources to match numerals to sets of objects. They recognise and name shapes, as they find them in the environment, when out walking.

Children learn about the natural world, as they plant and grow flowers and vegetables in the garden or discuss changes in the weather. They construct models, using very good resources, such as recycled materials and a wide range of equipment, including wooden train tracks and plastic construction sets. They develop their understanding of technology, using tills, cookers and a computer. Children create freely, using an excellent variety of craft materials, such as sequins, feathers, glitter and tinsel. They use their senses to investigate paint, sand and water, or dough with added glitter and smells. They enjoy singing many familiar songs, and use musical instruments to explore rhythm and sound. Children listen and move to music and engage in very imaginative role play, which is very effectively extended by staff. They develop good control of small equipment, as they use scissors, pens and glue spreaders. Able children enjoy large physical challenges in the summer, when they use wheeled toys and throwing or climbing equipment in the outdoor play area, but they are not consistently challenged in their physical development during the winter months.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents receive excellent information, which enables them to fully support their child's learning. They are provided with details about the Foundation Stage curriculum, when their child first joins the playgroup, including examples of activities for each aspect of the curriculum. Regular newsletters keep them very well informed about current and planned topics. Staff keep very clear records of children's progress, including photographs and samples of their work, as well as details of which stepping stones have been achieved and which will be the focus for future learning. This information is shared termly with parents, and their comments are added to records. Children's good progress is enhanced by these excellent communications with their carers, and the staff's success in involving parents in all aspects of their child's care and development.

All families are included and children are helped to feel valued, as staff show a genuine interest in meeting each child's needs. For example, children enjoy looking at a book about special family events, which includes photographs of themselves and their families. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities are very well included and supported, as staff work with their parents and other professionals, to provide appropriate care. All staff know the needs of these children and the strategies planned to help them, so that their care is always consistent.

Children behave very well, as they respond to the warm and positive approach of staff, to the management of their behaviour. They know the routines, such as tidying up when a designated piece of music is played, and they willingly comply. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They learn to share and take turns, as staff carefully explain why they should consider others. They explore different cultures and beliefs, as they celebrate a variety of festivals and use very good multi-cultural resources, such as cooking equipment, bi-lingual books and an African village set.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is supported by all the required documentation, and there are well-established systems to ensure that all policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated. Consequently, most documentation is comprehensive and shared appropriately with parents. Registration systems are mainly effective, as children self-register with their parents, and staff check that this is completed, but records do not include exact times of arrival, before formal registration at 09:30.

Children are cared for by very well-qualified and competent staff, who are committed to further training, to develop their skills, for the benefit of the children. Ratios are very good and children enjoy excellent individual attention, as staff work as an effective team and are deployed well, to support their progress. Children access the facilities of safe, clean and comfortable premises, and staff use current displays and resources thoughtfully, to create a child-friendly environment. Sessions are planned carefully, making good use of time and resources, to provide a wide range of interesting activities. The playgroup meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management are good. Staff and the committee regularly evaluate practice and constantly seek to improve the quality of provision for children. There are effective systems in place to monitor the nursery education, including regular staff reviews and appraisals, which clearly identify staff training needs. Areas for future development have been identified and funding is being sought to develop the outside area, for all-weather use.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, accident records have been updated, so that children's care is now consistent, when they are injured. Assessment systems have been improved and staff now systematically observe children's progress towards the early learning goals, using this information effectively, to plan for the next steps in their learning. Children's mathematical development has been further developed, and the daily routine now includes many opportunities for children to compare groups or solve simple number problems. Children now choose to look at books and to share them with others, throughout sessions. They enjoy a wide range of creative experiences, when they are able to use excellent resources, to develop and express their own ideas.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- review registration procedures, to ensure that an accurate record is kept of children's times of arrival.

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 consistent challenges for able children in physical development, including during inclement weather.

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