

# Rectory Lane Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	146424
<b>Inspection date</b>	16 January 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Kelly Eyre
<b>Setting Address</b>	Bridge Road West, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG1 2NU
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<b>Registered person</b>	Rectory Lane Nursery
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Childcare
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

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.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Rectory Lane Nursery is privately run. It opened in 1988 and operates from a self-contained building situated in the grounds of Woolenwick Infant and Nursery School in Stevenage, Hertfordshire. A maximum of 35 children may attend the nursery at any one time. It is open each weekday during term-time and sessions are from 09:30 until 12:00 and 12:30 to 14:30 for children aged under three, or 09:15 until 12:15 and 12:30 until 15:30 for children aged over three. Children can also stay for lunch. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 65 children aged from two to under five years on roll. The nursery serves the local and neighbouring community. It currently supports a number of children with disabilities and is able to support children who have learning difficulties and those who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs nine members of staff. Of these, eight hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a comfortable, clean environment. Their understanding of the relevance of good health and personal hygiene practices is promoted through following practical daily routines, such as washing their hands before cooking activities and before eating. The spread of infection is further minimised as staff follow clear daily procedures such as wearing appropriate protective clothing when changing nappies and cleaning the changing mat thoroughly between each use.

Children's special requirements with regard to health and diet are clearly documented and staff ensure that these are respected, using checklists to ensure that children are only offered the correct foods. Children's growth and development are promoted because they are offered a balanced range of healthy foods at snack and times, including fresh fruit, sandwiches and crackers. This area is further supported because parents are given written guidance detailing appropriate foods to be included in children's lunch boxes. Children are learning about the importance of a healthy diet through discussions with staff and topic work such as 'Vegetables are good for you'.

Children enjoy an appropriate range of physical activities which contribute to the promotion of their good health. They regularly use the outdoor play area or space is made indoors so that they are able to use larger play equipment such as the 'mini-gym', climbing frames, slides and ride-on toys, and smaller equipment such as balls and hoops. They also have opportunities to explore and improve their physical skills and coordination as they participate in activities such as action rhymes and music and movement sessions. They demonstrate skill and control in smaller physical movements, for example, most children are able to hold pencils correctly and put together small puzzle pieces. Children's health is further promoted as most paperwork is in place in order to monitor this. However, their health in an emergency situation would be affected as there are out-of-date items in the first aid box and there is no written parental permission to seek emergency medical advice or treatment.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment where their work is displayed and they have access to a range of play resources. Their safety is promoted by staff who have an effective understanding of this area and generally take steps to minimise hazards and risks. Informal safety checks are carried out before children arrive, ensuring that the setting is safe for them to use and they are able to move around safely, freely and independently. The daily implementation of policies and procedures ensures that staff are aware of safety practices and are able to promote children's safety in all areas. For example, there is a clear procedure regarding emergency evacuation and this is practised on a regular basis. However, children's safety is affected because staff have hot drinks during the session and these are potentially accessible to children.

Children's understanding of keeping themselves safe is promoted. They are consistently given clear explanations by staff to help them understand the relevance of safety rules, for example, they know how to carry scissors safely and understand why it is important not to run inside. Staff also make use of incidental opportunities, for example, when covering a topic of 'Bonfire

Night', children talk about safety around fireworks. Children have access to a range of toys and play resources that are appropriate for their size and developmental stages. Their welfare is well promoted because staff have attended additional training and have a good knowledge of child protection procedures. There is clear and comprehensive paperwork to support them in identifying, reporting and following up any concerns. The child protection procedure is shared with parents.

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

The provision is good.

Children are secure and settled. They come in happily at the start of sessions and are eager to explore the play resources and participate in the activities provided. Their self-esteem and confidence are consistently promoted because staff know the children well and are able to offer them appropriate support in their chosen activities. All activities are adapted to suit the individual children accessing them. This is supported by high staff ratios and staff who are generally skilled in assessing children and making judgements about when to intervene. For example, a child explores the resources in the water tray and is then joined by a member of staff who encourages the child to count how many handfuls of water are needed to fill the container, talking about the different types of fish and what they need to live.

Good planning supports the provision of a wide range of activities and play experiences and ensures that children are purposefully occupied. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is followed and the attention to detail in planning ensures that all areas of learning are covered and that children's play is fun, purposeful and stimulating. Children benefit from the positive attitude of the staff and from their continuous interaction and support. For example, staff members join in enthusiastically when acting out a story about a bear hunt, demonstrating the actions and supporting younger children so that all are able to participate and thoroughly enjoy this activity.

Children are making good progress in all areas of learning and their overall development is promoted because staff have a thorough knowledge of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage. Working to themes which are changed frequently provides opportunities for children to look at a range of interesting topics such as 'Vegetables', 'All About Me', 'Autumn', 'The Vikings' and 'Colours, Numbers and Shapes'. Children's learning is reinforced through the linking of activities and play resources to current themes, for example, children listen to a story about a tiger and are then involved in measuring strips to make a tiger's tale, using linked programmes on the computer, making tiger collages and exploring music which suggests animal movements. The good planning methods are supported by additional paperwork where staff record the activities and play resources accessed by the children at each session, utilising this information when planning future activities to ensure that children are offered a balanced range of opportunities and their individual needs are met.

Play resources are well organised so that children are able to access them easily and are generally able to make choices about their play and learning. Good forward-planning by staff ensures that children's interest is maintained. For example, before reading a group story, the staff member ensures that all resources are readily available, handing children soft toys which they add to a hat as the story progresses, and using a toy scarecrow to lead a discussion which ensures that children know what this is before the story begins. Individual children's development is consistently promoted as each child has daily one-to-one time with a member of staff; children's progress is checked by looking at their individual work files and the staff member then spends time on individual activities appropriate to the child's current developmental needs.

For example, one child is involved in a counting activity and another completes a sheet 'all about me', talking about family members, making a written record of these and drawing their pictures.

Good methods of assessment ensure that individual children's learning is promoted and any difficulties are noted at an early stage. Keyworkers use children's workbooks and regular observations and assessments to support this area. Child development profiles for each child, containing assessments in all areas of learning and development, are used effectively by staff to ensure that children's progress is recorded and their needs are taken into account on a daily basis.

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

The provision is good.

Children's understanding of the values and needs of others is developed as they participate in a wide variety of activities which promote their understanding of society and increase their awareness of other cultures and ways of life. These include celebrations connected with Christmas, Chinese New Year and Hanukkah, and topic work such as 'Christmas around the world' where children look at how Christmas is celebrated in other countries and cultures. Their understanding is further promoted through activities such as the production of a book about celebrations and festivals. Their awareness of their community is enhanced through activities such as visits to the lower school and trips to see the local pantomime.

Children's behaviour throughout the sessions is good and they are kind and considerate to each other and to staff. They are competent in organising turn-taking and sharing, for example, a child waits patiently for his turn on the computer. Children are particularly helpful, willingly and happily helping to tidy up and helping each other with daily tasks such as putting on dressing-up clothes and fetching scissors. Children are able to take responsibility for their own behaviour because staff give them clear explanations, enabling them to understand the implications of their behaviour and make decisions about this. Staff act as good role models, remaining calm and respectful at all times. Children mirror this behaviour, helping to create a calm but busy environment.

Children feel welcome and their sense of self-worth is promoted because staff respect the individuality of each child. Children's self-esteem is promoted and they are developing a positive self-image because staff praise them appropriately, and encourage them to discuss their views and ideas and to listen to others. An example of this is group story time, where each child's contributions to the discussions are valued and they are encouraged to listen to each other. Children who have special needs have their requirements clearly identified and consistently met because there are good support procedures in place and these are implemented practically on a daily basis. Individual Education Plans are used to set realistic targets which are reviewed regularly in order to track children's progress and promote their further development. Staff attend additional training to support this part of their work. They work closely with parents and this area is further supported by the additional resources they have collated, providing further information to parents about specific conditions and support groups.

Children benefit from the setting's good partnership with parents and carers. They are given clear, practical information in the form of a prospectus when their child starts at the pre-school. A monthly newsletter and informative notice boards provide further information such as daily routines and current curriculum plans, explanations of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage and the 'Birth to three matters' framework, information about tax benefits, child protection

and childhood illnesses. Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress through daily discussions with staff and regular parents' afternoons. Parents' views are sought and there is a clear complaints procedure which is readily available. This positive attitude ensures that parents' views are valued and appropriate care is provided for each child.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Overall, children's needs are met. Their daily activities and experiences are enhanced by the care provided by experienced staff and their good organisation of all areas. Children's care and safety are consistently promoted because there are robust procedures in place regarding staff recruitment and the checking of all staff to ensure that they have the required skills and experience and are suitable to work with children. A thorough staff induction procedure and ongoing daily monitoring ensure that the setting's policies and procedures are understood by all and are consistently applied. This is further supported by comprehensive job descriptions, ensuring that both staff and children are aware of their roles and responsibilities and are able to work appropriately and safely with children at all times.

Children's daily activities, routines and play opportunities are enhanced by the good organisation of space. Separate rooms for older and younger children ensure that they are able to play safely and their varying needs can be met. The practical implementation of written room plans means that rooms are well set out and have designated areas for different types of play, such as messy play, floor-based activities, quiet reading and table-top activities. This ensures that children are able to concentrate on their activities and move safely and independently between different areas. Good organisation and forward-planning ensures that staff are aware of daily activities and prepare these in advance so that children's routines are uninterrupted. An example of this is a member of staff leading a group story whilst other staff members set up the next range of activities. The clear organisation of all paperwork and records means that these are stored confidentially but are easily accessible, enabling staff to check that individual children's needs are met and to promote their ongoing safety and welfare.

Children's learning and development and their overall welfare are promoted by the good understanding that managers have of their roles and responsibilities. This is supported by the regular review of all work and the setting of appropriate action plans, ensuring that the group keep up to date with current legislation and practice. Children benefit from the positive attitude to staff training. All staff have individual training plans and any training attended is cascaded to other staff members, enabling them to constantly review and refresh their practice. Staff work well as a team, supporting each other to ensure that children's play and activities are uninterrupted and their experience of the setting is positive.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At their last inspection, the group was asked to conduct a risk assessment of the store cupboard/staff cloakroom area. This has been completed and a screen put up to separate the toilet and store area, improving safety, hygiene and privacy. They were asked to make sure that staff records of attendance include the arrival and departure times of individual staff members. All appropriate details are now recorded in a separate register, promoting the safety of staff and children and demonstrating that correct ratios are maintained. The group was also asked to ensure that the child protection policy includes the procedure to be followed in the

event of an allegation against a member of staff. This policy has now been updated to include all relevant procedures, further promoting the welfare of children.

### **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**

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.

### **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 there is written parental permission for the seeking of emergency medical advice or treatment
- ensure that the contents of the first aid boxes are checked frequently and replaced as necessary
- improve children's safety by reviewing the procedure for staff to have hot drinks during the session time.

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)