



Rocking Horse Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 219974
Inspection date 19 September 2005
Inspector Rachael Mankiewicz

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Registered person Victoria Hunt
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

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?

The Rocking Horse Day Nursery opened in 1997. It operates from purpose built single storey premises in the village of Greens Norton. The nursery serves the local area, and children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 64 children on roll. This includes children receiving funding for their nursery education. The nursery is able to support children with special educational needs, and those children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery opens five days a week all year round with the exception of bank holidays and a week at Christmas. Sessions are from 8:00 to 18:00.

A total of 17 staff work with the children. The majority of staff have an early years qualification to the equivalent of NVQ level 3. The setting receives support from the Northamptonshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PSLA).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children benefit from a clean, warm, comfortable and child-friendly environment. They explore and develop physical control while participating in stimulating indoor and outdoor experiences. For example, all children use the extensive activity equipment to their own stage of ability, successfully balancing on beams and stepping stones and negotiating obstacles on ride-ons. They begin to understand that exercise affects their bodies as they run around, participate in movement sessions and take walks around the village. Children move spontaneously and with confidence in the well organised space.

Children learn about healthy living as they enjoy a range of freshly cooked, nutritious meals and snacks for which the nursery has won awards. Parents have been involved in ensuring that the needs of all children are met. Children try new tastes, express their enjoyment and use good table manners during the sociable meal times. The older children access drinks from their snack bar, and regular fluids are encouraged.

Children's care is enhanced by the good procedures and practice followed by the staff, and as children imitate the staff and share good practice in health and personal care routines, such as protecting their hair during sand play. They readily wash their hands after messy play and before snack and lunch, and older children are aware that they are helping to prevent the spread of infection. Children take pride in showing their clean teeth after lunch and have an understanding of why they clean their teeth. They understand that they need their hats when the sun becomes stronger. Their welfare is safeguarded because staff have up to date knowledge of first aid in the event of any accident, and appropriate procedures are in place if children are unwell.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are safe as a result of the adults' very good awareness of health and safety and because all reasonable steps are taken to minimise the risk of accidents. Thorough risk assessments and good supervision by vigilant staff allow children freedom to choose activities that offer variety and challenge within safe limits. Children learn about safety and use high quality equipment appropriate to their age

and stage of development, and they begin to take personal responsibility for their safety. For example, they play enthusiastically but safely on the large play equipment, ride vehicles sensibly and negotiate space. They learn about road safety as an activity in the nursery and transfer their knowledge as they walk around the local environment. Children use high quality equipment appropriate to their age and stage of development. They safely and deftly manipulate tools and implements as they cook and garden and they develop good hand/eye coordination as they use scissors in many activities.

Children are well protected because staff have a clear understanding of the local child protection guidelines and up to date training. Their safety and welfare is further enhanced by staff carefully monitoring access to the premises, checking all equipment and complying with fire requirements.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children play, learn and have fun with the company of friends and adults at nursery. They benefit from the care and encouragement of qualified and experienced staff in the welcoming learning environment. Children's needs are met through effective organisation and planning for the progress of all children from babies through to five years of age. Staff make good use of the Birth to three matters framework to provide activities to meet the needs of the younger children. Children develop their independence and learn to play in groups as they participate in a range of interesting activities. For example, they all develop their physical skills through a very good range of outdoor equipment and activities and construction activities which help develop hand/eye coordination. They develop positive relationships as they listen and communicate well with each other and with the adults, with all children contributing to the sociable activities in the nursery.

Children through the age ranges explore a variety of interesting materials which stimulate their curiosity. For example, babies and toddlers enjoy developing their senses as they play with foam, paint and water. Children use their imaginations well and with enthusiasm as they take part in a wide range of art and craft activities and music. They freely and confidently express their ideas in the comfortable and friendly environment. Their perseverance to complete activities and their confidence to share feelings develops as they play.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children participate enthusiastically in the planned activities on offer and as they take the initiative, choose resources and express ideas. They use their imagination well as they play in the home corner and small world figures in the dolls' house. Creative and imaginative skills are being promoted with an excellent range of art resources, and the children take pride in their paintings and model making. Children begin to make sense of the world around them as they explore a variety of materials and explore why things happen and how things work. For example, they explore a variety of construction materials to make models of helicopters and other items that interest them. Information technology is developed

through good access to the computer and remote controlled toys. Children are aware of their own bodies and their ability to use their senses through planned and unplanned activities. They find out about the environment as they plant seeds and grow sunflowers and strawberries, and go for walks around the village. They begin to explore the wider world through visits to the school and shops, looking at holiday destinations and taking part in the celebration of festivals.

Children develop good relationships with staff and each other, as they take turns and work together well in small and large group activities. They show concern for others as they play, making sure their friends are included in the game. Children interact and chat, showing awareness of the listener and listening well. They understand that print has meaning and make marks freely throughout their activities helping them use their emerging writing for real purposes. Older children are beginning to develop the use of mathematical ideas to solve problems in planned activities and by participating in many day-to-day domestic routines. For example, children compare two numbers as they count during number games and during computer programmes, and work out how many children can go in the home corner.

Staff make effective use of time and resources to provide a broad and balanced range of activities and experiences across the six areas of learning which motivate the children and enable them to make progress. Children are encouraged to make the most of their experiences by the staff's careful consideration of what the child might be able to learn. Generally, they are able to persevere and complete activities and extend their learning within the routines of the day. Appropriate individual challenge is ensured through good questioning and enabling by the knowledgeable staff. However, systems for planning for the individual child's progress are in the initial stage of development. Observations and assessments of children's progress towards the early learning goals and information gained from the parents are used to inform planning on an informal basis.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are appreciated and valued as individuals by the staff which helps ensure the children are settled and happy and play an active part in the nursery. They gain confidence and self-assurance through making choices about activities. Children have good access to resources although they do not have free access to the outdoor area. Older children understand their own needs and begin to respect the needs of others. They make sure their friends are included in the activities and are aware that some children have different needs to themselves. Gaining knowledge of different cultures and religions as they celebrate festivals and national days, and taking part in charity events at home and for different countries helps them understand about the diversity of the wider world. They enjoy meeting people from the local community as they walk around the village and join in activities locally such as school and Church services.

The children behave very well as they are made aware of what is appropriate behaviour. They respond well to the consistent boundaries set them and the

encouragement to behave well given by the caring staff. Older children begin to take responsibility and manage their own behaviour as they use a timer to show when it is time to change over on the computer, and they use the 'kind hearts and helping hands' nursery ethos as they offer to help adults and friends. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The children's well-being at the nursery is enhanced by the good partnership with parents. Parents are informed about how the nursery operates and the activities provided through a comprehensive welcome pack, written notices, newsletters and displays and information about the care of the children. Staff obtain information about the children's needs, and their achievements are recorded on settling in at the nursery. Children's progress in nursery education is fostered by regular discussions to ensure that parents know how their children are developing and how they can contribute to their children's progress. Staff suggest how parents can consolidate and extend what the children have learnt previously at nursery.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Staff greatly enhance the children's care by the exceptional quality of organisation throughout the nursery and the good leadership and management of the nursery education.

Space and resources are well organised and children benefit from this as they make the most of the play and learning opportunities. All documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well being is in place and is reviewed regularly to ensure that the individual care plans are met.

Children benefit from the very good staff to child ratios and the care given by qualified and skilled staff, as can be seen through the good supervision and sensitive interaction. All staff are committed to continuous improvement and development of the nursery care and education and of their own personal development. They continue to upgrade their training and knowledge which can be evidenced through the range of activities and resources and innovative ideas available in the nursery. The staff and management work well together as an effective and committed team with clear aims underpinning the care given, and with systems in place to evaluate the care and education. Policies and procedures are reviewed regularly. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the registered provider was asked to develop the staff's awareness of equal opportunities and behaviour management and this has been done to enhance the care of the children.

At the last inspection of the nursery education, the registered provider was asked to review the assessments and recording of information on children's progress to influence planning. This has been done in part and the consolidation of planning for

the progress of individual children has been made an outcome of this inspection.

Complaints since the last inspection

Two concerns were raised with Ofsted about staffing ratios, the safety of the car park, and about hygiene at the Nursery in relation to animals. Ofsted wrote to the Nursery and asked them to provide information in response to the concerns raised and in relation to National Standard 2 (Organisation), 6 (Safety) and 7 (Health). The information provided has demonstrated that the National Standards are being met and Ofsted intend to take no further action

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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):

- increase opportunities for children to extend and persevere with their interests by further access and choice of resources, including the outdoor area, and the organisation of space and time.

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 the system of observation and assessment of children's progress towards the early learning goals so that assessments are systematic and the information gained is used to plan the next stage in learning for all children.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk