



RAF Coningsby Nursery Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number EY136880

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Inspector Anne Barnsley

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Telephone number 01526 347843

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Registered person RAF Coningsby Nursery Centre

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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

RAF Coningsby Nursery Centre opened in 1990. It operates from its own purpose-built premises which are located within the residential area of the RAF base in the village of Coningsby. The nursery serves the local area and beyond.

The nursery is registered to care for 105 children from birth to 5 years. There are currently 70 children on roll. This includes 32 funded three-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery is able to support children with special needs

and those who have English as a second language.

The nursery opens each weekday, all year round between 07:30 and 17:30 hours. However, the sessions for funded children only run during school term times between 09:00 and 11:45 hours.

There are twenty one childcare staff in addition to the manger, deputy and two cleaning staff. They are all appropriately qualified and/or experienced. The nursery is able to access support from a curriculum adviser through the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in clean, well-maintained premises. Policies and procedures are well written and effectively promote the good health of children. Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through consistent routines and excellent levels of support and guidance from staff. Children understand their own personal needs, and either cater for these independently, or feel secure and confident to ask for help.

They have healthy snacks and drinks at break time and these take into account any special dietary requirements. There is currently, however, no provision for children to help themselves to water during the session if they become thirsty. Children's individual needs are met well as they can have a lunch that has been prepared at home and is heated in the nursery, or they can bring a packed lunch. All hot meals are checked with a probe to ensure they are the correct temperature and records are maintained. All meals, and the perishable contents of packed lunches, are stored in the fridge to keep them fresh. The fridge temperature is taken three times each day and a record of the temperature is maintained to ensure that food is kept fresh.

Children have excellent levels of physical play on a daily basis. Activities are varied and enable children to learn new physical skills and to progress existing ones. Children can rest or sleep if they need to. They are forming a positive attitude to exercise and rest. Children use small tools with increasing precision and are developing good control and hand-eye coordination.

Babies and younger children are cared for very well. The staff discuss routines and preferences with parents to ensure that each child's needs are fully met. Records of food, sleep and nappy changing are kept to share with parents and to enable staff to identify and address any health concerns at the soonest opportunity. Babies and young children have individual bedding and baskets for their products. Equipment is cleaned regularly and any items that babies put in their mouths are disinfected each day. These procedures are effective in reducing the risk of spreading infections. Babies are taken out for walks to provide them with fresh air.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are kept safe because of the staff's high regard for safety in the provision. Staff are stringent in following the effective procedures, ensuring that the risk of injury is minimised. Instant action is taken if a potential risk is identified and children are encouraged to understand how they can keep themselves safe, for example, not to rub their eyes when they are playing with the sand. Children are well supported by staff who are alert and aware of what children are doing at all times. Children listen well to staff guidance and explanations. They are learning to take responsibility for keeping themselves safe.

Children have a broad range of safe, good quality equipment which is appropriate for their ages and stages of development. Resources are safely stored, and when set out, enable children to self-select and express themselves freely in a safe environment. Resources are checked regularly for damage and children are learning to care for their toys by helping to tidy away when they have finished playing with them. The baby room has a fire trolley which ensures that the babies can be evacuated swiftly from the building in the event of a fire. All staff complete first aid and child protection training. Children are well protected by staff who are aware of the procedures that must be followed and are confident to implement them.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The care, learning and play experiences for children are good. Children arrive happy and are confident to leave their parent/carer and eagerly engage in play of their choice. Children have settled well in this provision, and new or very young children are extremely well supported by staff. Children interact very well with each other and staff. They are fluent communicators, sharing their ideas and experiences with enthusiasm. Children choose confidently from a wide range of resources and move between activities when they are ready. They have clear ideas about what they wish to do and how long they wish to spend at an activity. Some children persevere with tasks that are complex and intricate and require high levels of concentration and skill. Children enjoy group activities such as greeting time and physical activities; they are starting to form friendships and make choices about who they wish to play with or sit next to.

Babies have a large floor space to move around on and a very good range of equipment for their different developing needs. Very young babies are held when being bottle fed and are spoken to softly by the staff. Very good bonds are being formed. The room is attractively decorated to provide the babies with visual stimuli, however, pictures are placed a little high on the walls which makes it difficult for babies to look at them. Babies are provided with a good range of tactile media during organised craft activities but there are limited tactile and holistic resources available for babies to develop their senses further.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning for three and four-year-olds is satisfactory. Most

staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and contribute their ideas to planning a broad and varied curriculum that covers all areas of learning. Staff's knowledge is used less well to extend and consolidate children's learning in general play situations. Conversations are not always purposeful and meaningful and the staff's ability to be flexible in progressing children through the stepping stones is overshadowed by their lack of confidence and some recent staff changes that have taken place. Staff do, however, place great focus on encouraging children's natural interests and choices. Children are regularly observed by staff but the observations do not always demonstrate by example, which step each child has reached. Staff know their children well and use informal systems to group children according to their needs. Written records do not fully demonstrate how each child's developing abilities are being met and where they need to go next. Staff work with children in both small and large groups and provide a good balance between adult and child-led activities. This enables children to explore and experiment for themselves and also ensures that they feel well supported and have a sense of belonging to a group.

Children are confident and enjoy good relationships with staff and each other. Behaviour is extremely good in this provision. Staff are excellent role models for children. They treat children with kindness and respect, and value each child as an individual. Children have consistent and clear boundaries within a familiar routine. They are guided and supported well in their understanding of these. Staff use strategies that effectively manage and promote positive behaviour. Staff work very well as a team and successfully provide children with a secure and stable environment in which they are learning right from wrong and how to interact harmoniously in a group.

Children are very good communicators and confidently approach adults and initiate conversation. They are secure in their environment and confident to make decisions. Children are developing their independence by making choices and being encouraged to care for their own needs. Children are beginning to use writing as a means of communication although there are limited writing materials available for children to practise their emergent writing spontaneously through general play. Children enjoy listening to stories and enjoy looking at books for short periods of time. Most children can count beyond five and are beginning to recognise the order of numbers. They know the names of common shapes and can distinguish between different sizes. Children use technology well in their role play, acting out real and imagined experiences, and most are familiar with computers and how they work. Children have daily outside physical play which is varied and helps them to develop different muscles and skills. They have regular walks around the local community and are learning about the natural world and a sense of place. Children enjoy role play, using their own imagination to play happily alone in their thoughts or, to organise acted experiences with peers. They know and enjoy a wide range of songs, actions and rhymes, and have regular exposure to different types of listening music and musical instruments.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff obtain good information from parents when their child first starts and they use this to plan and cater for children's individual needs. This includes finding out about children's religious or cultural needs, and any specific or special educational need that a child may have. Additional staff have been employed to provide children who have a special need with good levels of support. Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of equal opportunities and provide well for all children on an individual basis. They liaise closely with parents and other professionals who are involved in the child's care. They introduce children to other cultures and the wider community through planned activities and resources that promote positive images of diversity.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Staff have formed solid relationships with parents and exchange information on a daily basis, thus ensuring that the developing or changing needs of the children and families can be identified and met. Staff work closely with the parents of children with special educational needs to assist them with planning appropriate levels of challenge and support. Parents receive comprehensive information about the setting in general, but less detailed information about the educational programme and ways in which they can contribute to their child's learning, either in the setting or at home. The social, spiritual, and cultural development of children is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The staff are deployed effectively to ensure that children are well cared for and protected. Staff have appropriate qualifications, skills or experience to cater for the needs of the age group they have been assigned to. All staff complete child protection training and first aid training and understand their duty of care towards all children. All staff receive induction support and effectively implement policies and procedures to a high standard. The policies and procedures of the setting promote children's health and well-being.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Although systems are in place to monitor the strengths and weaknesses of the setting for nursery education, these are currently not used effectively to improve any identified weaknesses or to promote strengths sufficiently well as good practice. There are some weaknesses with the organisation of time and food during snack breaks and lunch breaks. A new staff team is working hard to develop an improved system. They are aware that, on occasions, children have to wait for their snack or lunch for some time whilst the needs of other children are attended to or food is organised. This is also applicable at the start of the day when children arrive and the room has not been set out.

All staff participate in an appraisal scheme and are kept up to date with their training needs. This is a dedicated, committed team who are motivated and keen to introduce new ideas to improve the setting for the children. Staff have a proactive attitude towards training and working together as a team, sharing ideas and communicating these regularly through staff meetings and general conversations. This promotes an inclusive environment in which every child matters. The provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection the practitioner agreed to ensure that adequate staff were always present in each room to meet the needs of the children and to increase the information that parents receive about the nursery education.

Satisfactory progress has been made and new staff have been employed to ensure that the needs of all children are met. Some information about the nursery education has been added to the nursery brochure, however, parents are still not being provided with sufficient information about the nursery education to enable them to contribute with their child's learning if they wish.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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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 drinking water is readily available to children at all times
- ensure that visual displays in the baby room are positioned at an appropriate height and that babies have a range of sensory and holistic resources that develop their senses.

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):

- ensure that observations clearly demonstrate the stage each child has reached and where they need to go next. Use this information to inform future planning and to determine how children should be grouped
- ensure that children always have writing materials to enable them to practice

their emergent writing spontaneously and help consolidate their learning

- improve questioning techniques during general play situations to extend children's knowledge and consolidate what they have already learnt
- ensure that the parents of children receiving nursery education are provided with good quality information about ways they can contribute to their child's learning at home if they wish
- ensure that the systems used to monitor and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of nursery education are used effectively to improve the organisation of time and resources at the start of the session and during snack and lunch time.

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