

Rowan Tree Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	496768
Inspection date	23 May 2007
Inspector	Jo Rowley / Kerry Freshwater
Setting Address	9 Guessens Road, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, AL8 6QW
Telephone number	01707 334715
E-mail	
Registered person	Child Base Limited
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?

Rowan Tree Day Nursery is one of the Childbase chain of nurseries. It opened in 2001 and operates from nine rooms with additional facilities in a converted building close to the centre of Welwyn Garden City. The children share access to three secure, enclosed outside play areas.

A maximum of 74 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 with additional early and late sessions by arrangement from 07.30 to 18.30. The nursery is open for 52 weeks of the year with the exception of bank holidays.

There are currently 88 children aged from six weeks to under five years on roll. Of these, 26 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery are able to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery receives support from an Early Years teacher and 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 a comfortable, clean environment. They are beginning to learn about the importance of personal hygiene, for example, they wash their hands before meal times. Their understanding of the relevance of these practices is promoted because most staff discuss issues with them. Older children are aware of the routines in place and one child notices that 'something is missing' as they sit down to eat their lunch. When asked what was missing by a member of staff the child replies 'we haven't washed our hands'. All children are offered very healthy and nutritious snacks and meals, promoting their growth and development. These are prepared each day on the premises using a wide range of fresh ingredients. Menus are rotated on a four weekly basis and are changed to take into account the four seasons of a year. Children's special requirements with regard to health and diet are very well documented, all staff are aware of these and parents' wishes are respected. Clear records are kept of children's health needs, enabling staff to provide the appropriate care, and dietary requirement forms are updated regularly, this protects children's welfare.

Children enjoy a wide range of physical activities which contribute to their good health. They develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills and co-ordination as they participate in activities such as outside play in the well equipped garden, which is separated into three different age-appropriate areas with appropriate equipment provided in each area. Children are therefore able to enjoy regular access to this area, where they play on the climbing frames, slides, ride-on toys and use a range of equipment such as, balls and hoops. One of the areas in the garden is designed to offer children opportunities to grow plants, they are involved in the digging and planting process, using appropriate tools. Children enjoy the visiting 'Kindaroo' group sessions, where they participate in varied physical activities. Older children's independence is promoted and they show an understanding of their own needs, for example, visiting the bathroom independently.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The nursery provides a welcoming and friendly environment for children and parents, rooms are nicely decorated and provide parents with displays of their children's work. There is a suitable range of good quality equipment that is appropriate to the needs of children attending. They are encouraged to independently access a variety of toys and resources which are set out by staff before each session. Children use some equipment which is made by the nursery staff such as, bottles containing coloured water and various sensory baskets containing different materials such as, wood. Furniture is child sized, in good repair and easy for children to use.

Children are kept safe as there is a secure entrance system and all visitors to the nursery are requested to sign in and out of the premises. Staff carry out a risk assessment at the beginning and end of every day and further detailed checks are carried out on a three-monthly basis. However, the nursery is sometimes cold and therefore, suitable temperatures are not always achieved. Children learn to keep themselves safe as appropriate discussions help children understand the consequences of their actions. For example, staff encourage children not to climb on the stair gate whilst lining up to go outside, as they may hurt themselves. Children gain an awareness of the emergency evacuation procedures as these are discussed and practised on a regular basis.

Children are protected from staff who supervise them as they are not permitted to work at the nursery until they have had suitable checks completed. Children's welfare is safeguarded as staff follow sound guidelines regarding child protection and have an appropriate understanding of the procedures they need to follow. There is a designated member of staff who has overall responsibility for child protection, to ensure that the correct procedures are followed if staff have any concerns in this area, and all staff have completed either in house or external child protection training which is regularly updated.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are interested in a suitable range of activities. They explore their surroundings and the selection of resources, which staff set for out each session. They enjoy playing imaginatively in the role play area, with dolls, pretending to bath and change them. They engage in the discovery bags and show enthusiasm when discussing the use of various brushes such as, scrubbing brushes and pastry brushes. Activities are introduced in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework and most staff have attended training in line with the framework. Therefore, younger children's learning experiences are generally promoted. Children know the routines well and this helps them feel secure. They are building effective relationships with staff. Young children show an interest in books; they show enjoyment and concentration as staff read to them individually or as a group. Children are learning to share and they help staff to tidy away the toys. Children are rewarded with lots of praise and encouragement. They are confident in approaching staff and visitors to ask for assistance or to share experiences from home.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and children are making acceptable progress towards the early learning goals. However, some staff have an insufficient knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and how young children develop. Staff plan a range of activities where the learning intentions for the children are highlighted and children's individual development is observed and recorded. Documentation shows that this information is used to inform planning and the children's progress through the stepping stones. However, it is not clear how this is achieved, as some staff's interaction with the older children is limited and there is ineffective use of challenge such as, questioning 'how' and 'why'. Attention is also required to further develop the more able children.

Children communicate suitably with their peers and other adults. They enjoy carpet time and speak confidently about what they have been doing as well as what is happening at home. For example, one child excitedly said 'my mummy is having a baby, we are going to find out if it is a boy or a girl'. They enjoy listening to stories and are able to access books independently. They have individual name cards and there is an abundance of labels, pictures and words around the room. However, there is a lack of opportunity for children to practise their writing skills and although they have independent access to pens and pencils the range is insufficient. There is a specific maths area where children are able to access clocks, sand timers and a number line, however, children are not effectively developing their mathematical skills as there is limited use of counting and missed opportunities for calculation. For example, a table of large dominoes are available for children to use. There is limited involvement from some staff and so children use the dominoes to build a tower, therefore, opportunities for counting and calculation are missed.

Children are currently learning about 'traditional stories' where staff have planned activities that generally cover the six areas of learning. However, activities are not regularly changed and so children are using the same equipment each day for a week before they are rotated. Children have previously covered topics such as, how things grow. They have participated in planting flowers to make hanging baskets and they help take care of the nursery rabbit, Daisy. They confidently use pretend telephones and cookers in the home corner and have independent access to the computer and age-appropriate games for learning. Children learn about their community, other countries and festivals through topic work such as, 'Chinese New Year' and 'Harvest festival'.

Most children are confident and eager to take part in physical activities. They are developing an understanding and awareness for others, through regular timetabled opportunities for outside play and physical activities such as, 'Kindaroo' where they are encouraged to jump, hop, dance, listen and respond to instruction. They are effective in their manoeuvring around obstacles whilst riding wheeled bikes and particularly enjoy the parachute game, where they try to keep a ball floating on top of the parachute. Children use a variety of small and large equipment in physical activities, whilst developing a sense of space. They explore paints and the mixing of colours in planned creative activities. They enjoy singing songs as a group and participate in role play activities such as, 'granny's house' where children imitate the characters from the story Red Riding Hood.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are happy, confident and relaxed in their surroundings. On arrival children generally separate from their parents and carers confidently and with ease. They receive a warm welcome from staff members who are sensitive to individual needs, for example, newly settled children are given extra support where needed. Children have individual coat pegs which display their name and their photograph, developing their sense of belonging. They have access to a varied range of resources, including books, dolls, dressing up, small world figures and planned activities celebrating different festivals which assists them in gaining an awareness of diversity and the wider world. Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress through topical displays, regular discussions with staff, newsletters and parent's evenings. The nursery staff are aware that some children may have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, although there are none currently attending the nursery, and are proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken to include all children in the setting.

Children behave generally well throughout the nursery, although not all staff are fully aware of the behaviour management procedure in place and therefore, are not always consistent in their approach. Staff listen to what children have to say and treat them with respect. Children are consistently praised for their efforts and their efforts are celebrated, for example, younger children have their photograph displayed on a praise board, with information such as, 'well done for eating all your lunch'. Older children have individual praise books, where they have stars placed inside with comments such as, 'thank you for helping to tidy up the art area'. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Individual children's backgrounds are acknowledged and respected and children are learning to respect one another and their environment. They are encouraged to share, take turns and negotiate in their play, enabling them to develop effective social skills.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. There is a strong commitment throughout the nursery to involve parents in the setting and in their children's learning. Parents are warmly

welcomed and staff ensure that they are aware of all procedures and policies. Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress through topical displays, regular discussions with staff, stay and play opportunities, regular newsletters and parent evenings. Parents are made aware of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage and the 'Birth to three matters' framework, enabling them to feel confident in the staff's ability to meet their child's needs and promote their learning and development. There are informative notice boards which are accessible to parents and contain relevant information including, for example, current themes, child development and health and safety. Parents are also able to access clearly displayed nursery policies and procedures and the previous Ofsted inspection report. This positive attitude ensures that parents are kept informed of relevant changes, standards are maintained and appropriate care is provided for each child.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from being cared for by friendly and approachable staff. The manager works closely with her staff, who work generally well as a team. Most staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities, although some have a limited understanding of the Foundation Stage so that satisfactory standards of education are provided. The provision generally organises resources and there are further opportunities for these to be rotated around on a regular basis and for older children to ask and make choices. Most staff spend their time interacting with the children who are generally busy, engaged and provided with suitable activities and play opportunities to develop their emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities. The children's needs are met. Records, policies and procedures are maintained in line with the National Standards.

The leadership and management of the group is satisfactory. The manager has developed a relationship with the staff team and offers support where required. Regular appraisals enable her to encourage staff to update their skills and knowledge. Staff sometimes work together to implement a range of suitable activities which promote children's development. Most staff are all involved in the development of children's learning, sitting with them and extending their language where appropriate. However, some staff do not offer children suitable challenges or support children's learning consistently. Some staff prompt discussion and ask the children appropriate questions to ensure that they are progressing in their learning. However, there is a lack of understanding in relation to the Foundation Stage, consequently children miss out on opportunities for spontaneous learning.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection the nursery agreed to review the daily registers to ensure that staff details were included. All registers contain times of staff arrivals and departures, therefore, protecting children's safety and welfare. They agreed to ensure that children's sleep patterns and routines were discussed and agreed with parents. All individual requirements are discussed with parents, including their sleep and routines, enabling staff to meet the needs of all children and therefore, protecting their well-being. The nursery agreed to provide a suitable range of resources to give children familiar role play experiences in the pre-school rooms. Children have access to a variety of resources which promote familiar experiences and therefore, their learning is developed.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last 1 April 2004 there have been two complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

On the 17 October 2006 Ofsted received a concern that a child had suffered unexplained injuries whilst attending the provision. Ofsted took the immediate steps of statutory suspending the provider's registration on the 18 October 2006 whilst the injuries were investigated by outside agencies. Ofsted were able to reinstate the provider's registration on the 19 October 2006, after one day, as Ofsted was satisfied that the provider was able to implement measures to ensure that children remain safe whilst attending and due to new information received. The outside agencies finalised their investigations after watching CCTV footage and interviewing staff and concluded that the injuries were accidental and caused by the child themselves after being distressed in their cot. The provider continues to meet the National Standards and remains qualified for registration.

On 31 January 2006 Ofsted received a complaint that raised concerns regarding staff ratios. Ofsted conducted an unannounced visit to the provision on 9 February 2006 to inspect against National Standard 2 (Organisation). As a result of the visit one action was identified as follows: Std 2, ensure that the room registers are accurately recorded and include the members of staff working in the room. A satisfactory response to this action was received on 27 February 2006. The provider continues to meet the National Standards and remains qualified for registration.

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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The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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 all rooms are maintained at an adequate temperature
- ensure that all staff are consistent in their support of children's play and learning (also applies to nursery education)
- ensure that all staff are aware of the behaviour management policy and are effective in promoting this.

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 further opportunities for children to develop their understanding of maths and language in everyday situations
- provide activities that develop children's learning, whilst providing challenge for more able children.
- improve staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum in order to ensure that all six areas of learning are covered.

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