

Rainbow Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	221724
Inspection date	22 November 2007
Inspector	Emma Bright
Setting Address	The Old Clinic, Downham Road, Ely, Cambridgeshire, CB6 1AF
Telephone number	01353 667283
E-mail	
Registered person	The Trustees of Rainbow 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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Rainbow Preschool is managed by a voluntary management committee, made up of parents of children at the pre-school. It opened in the 1970s and operates from the Old Clinic in Ely, Cambridgeshire. A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open five days a week during school term times from 09:15 to 11:45 for younger children and 12:15 to 14:45 for older children. Two days a week a lunch club is offered for older children from 11:45 to 12:15. All children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 53 children aged from one to under five years on roll. Of these, 20 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The pre-school currently supports a small number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The pre-school employs four staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is currently working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children successfully learn about leading a healthy lifestyle through interesting, practical experiences. They are able to run around, exerting themselves outdoors and get plenty of exercise to promote their growth and development. For example, older children speed along on scooters and tricycles with confidence and younger children persevere to throw balls into the hoop, proudly announcing 'I done a goal!' Children develop their small muscular skills and use a superb range of tools and utensils to acquire new manipulative skills. Older children recognise the effect of activity on their bodies; they know when they are thirsty and explain 'I'm sweating from running outside' and when they need to rest because they sit down saying 'I'm tired out'.

All children show an excellent understanding of the importance of good personal hygiene, which they learn through regular routines and sensitive reminders from practitioners when necessary. For example, young children confidently declare that 'you put your hand on your mouth when you cough'. Children are successfully protected from the risk of cross-infection because practitioners follow meticulous hygiene routines. For example, all eating utensils are washed at high temperature in a dishwasher and this helps children to remain healthy.

Children thrive because they are very well cared for if they become unwell or in the event of an accident because clear information is gathered from parents. Extensive records and documents are in place to record accidents and any medication which has been administered. For example, additional records are given to parents for any head injury which also contain information on what to look for if their child becomes unwell. In addition all practitioners hold first aid certificates. Children's nutritional needs are extremely well met; practitioners plan a varied range of snacks, which children tuck into enthusiastically. They are beginning to make connections about healthy food being 'good for you' and announce that drinking milk 'makes me big and strong like Daddy'. Children readily help themselves to water from a water cooler whenever they need it so they are well hydrated and can think effectively.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely well cared for in a bright, cheerful and well-maintained building; great emphasis is given to making sure that the environment is welcoming for children and their families. The different rooms are expertly set out before children arrive each day, with a wealth of exciting and challenging activities, which stimulate children's interest. Children's art work is beautifully displayed and this significantly enhances their sense of belonging. Children use an excellent range of interesting resources that are appropriate for their age and stage of development, and these are rigorously checked by practitioners to ensure they are in good condition and are completely safe for children to use. Children select resources to support and develop their play; they engage in purposeful activity and safely choose items themselves which significantly enhances their independence.

Children's welfare is fully safeguarded; they are very well protected and kept safe from harm as all practitioners have an excellent understanding of their role in child protection. They regularly access training to ensure their knowledge is up to date and in line with local procedures. Parents are well informed about the setting's responsibilities through a clear and detailed policy,

which is included in the parents' prospectus. Children's safety is greatly enhanced by superb security procedures to restrict access to the setting and prevent them from leaving the premises unaccompanied. Parents and carers are absolutely clear about the setting's procedures and this effectively assures children's safety. Children learn about keeping safe as practitioners provide simple, but clear explanations to help them think about why, for example, they should eat slowly; children know that this is because 'you might choke'.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children's experiences are greatly enhanced by the skilful interaction of practitioners who clearly enjoy working with them; they use their very good understanding of child development to support children's learning. In addition, the team use the 'Birth to three matters' framework as a reference tool to assess the progress of younger children and to create an environment where they make very good progress. Although a well-prepared and rich learning environment is available, some daily routines do not always enable the younger children to fully benefit from it to extend their independent learning. Children acquire new knowledge and skills because practitioners gently encourage them to participate in activities, using very good questioning skills to help children think and develop their language.

All children enjoy their time in the pre-school; they arrive eagerly, separating happily from their parents and carers, and settling readily into their activities. Children play effectively on their own or with others and form strong friendships with their peers. Close and caring relationships throughout the setting increase children's sense of trust and help them to develop a strong sense of self. Practitioners are skilled at providing interesting activities and experiences appropriate to each age group. For example, young children play 'what's in the box?' competently guessing from simple clues which animal it might be. Older children play an advanced version of 'Kim's Game' where they skilfully guess which figure has been removed using Makaton sign language to convey their answer. This means all children benefit from the varied methods that help them to learn effectively and support their growing skills.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children make outstanding progress because practitioners have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage. They are perceptive to children's interests and make effective use of questions to challenge their thinking and language skills. Children respond positively to this challenge and enjoy demonstrating what they know with great enthusiasm. Practitioners effectively assess children's achievements and this ensures that they build on what children already know and can do. Planning is exceptional because practitioners understand how everyday activities support children's learning and they plan a balanced programme of activities and experiences that help children take the next step in their learning. There is an excellent balance between adult and child-led activities, which allows children to pursue their own interests and learn at their own pace.

Children are developing exceptionally good speaking and listening skills; they confidently make valuable contributions to group discussions and enjoy sharing what they know. For example, they choose to say 'bonjour' at registration and they explain to visitors 'that's French'. A word rich environment means that children's early literacy skills are developing extremely well; they demonstrate understanding that print carries meaning in activities such as cooking where they explain that 'the recipe has all the ingredients to make biscuits'. Children take delight in listening

to well-read stories, joining in eagerly to say what might happen next. Their continuing interest in books is further encouraged through a library system which allows children to take books home to share with their parents.

Children are highly independent and the range of stimulating activities enables them to share responsibility for their learning. For example, they competently prepare their own lunch, carefully making sandwiches with fillings of their choice. Children's behaviour is exemplary; they learn from practitioners' good example saying 'please' and 'thank you' which promotes harmony and means that children play in a warm and secure atmosphere. In addition, children readily praise each other's efforts saying to each other 'you are doing it very well'. Children enjoy talking about events in their own lives that are important to them; they discuss going to the doctors and having 'injections in my arm' and talk knowledgeably about the seasons explaining that it is autumn because 'the leaves are falling off the trees'.

Children have excellent opportunities to learn about mathematics, counting reliably, and they use mathematical language expertly in their play. They hold up four fingers on one hand to show how old they are, then reflecting for a moment hold up two fingers on two hands announcing 'and that's four too!' Children use mathematical language to describe shape and size as they cut up their sandwiches into 'small squares' and 'big triangles'. They compare numbers and know that five is more than three.

Children explore their creativity in the excellent range of art and craft activities because a strong emphasis is placed on developing children's self-expression. They freely produce excellent drawings, pictures and models to represent their ideas and these are beautifully displayed for others to admire and enjoy. Children express their imagination and act out scenarios using their imaginations in the role play area. For example, they pretend to be travel agents writing out tickets to go to Australia or America. They take turns to be passengers or the pilot who announces after a short flight 'we're landing in three minutes'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Practitioners are sensitive to children's needs and consistently interact with them at a high level to extend their learning and play; they listen to children's comments and ideas, treating what children say with respect. This contributes significantly to the children's sense of belonging and continuously develops their confidence and self-esteem. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They have very good opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world around them through a range of very well-planned activities. For example, children take part in a sponsored 'wheely event' to raise money for charity and they make biscuits to give out on visits to their neighbours in the old people's home. Clear systems are in place to welcome children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Children benefit from the setting's very strong emphasis of working with parents and carers; excellent settling-in procedures that are based around their individual needs help to support children in the transition between home and the setting. For example, young children who find separation difficult benefit from a photographic timetable featuring themselves at key moments during the session. Practitioners sensitively talk with them so that they understand about what happens next and this helps children to feel emotionally secure. Parents speak very highly of the provision; they receive clear and detailed information so they know about activities and events, and have daily opportunities to discuss their child with practitioners.

Children's behaviour is very good. They interact confidently with adults and their peers, learning to consider the needs of others and to work together co-operatively. Practitioners set clear boundaries and have high expectations for all children in the setting, which helps them to learn to negotiate with others and take responsibility for their own behaviour. For example, children contribute to the setting's behaviour rules by drawing pictures to demonstrate 'we are kind' or 'we keep our hands to ourselves' and they politely remind each other of these rules. Practitioners use positive language to reinforce the rules of the setting and as a result children work harmoniously together.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of early education is outstanding. Practitioners actively seek parents' views about their child's needs, interests and achievements before the child starts, and on a regular basis throughout their time there. This contributes significantly to children's well-being in the setting. Children's records are available to parents on a regular basis and they meet regularly with their child's key worker to ensure that they know how their child is progressing and developing. Practitioners are keen to involve parents in their children's learning. They have set up a book lending scheme and provide parents with 'activities at home' sheets. These inform parents of their current topics and suggests activities that they could enjoy at home with their children to support their learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Practitioners work exceptionally well together as a cohesive team and demonstrate great enthusiasm for creating a learning environment that stimulates and challenges children of all ages. Policies, records and procedures are clear and comprehensive, clearly underpinning the very good practice in promoting positive outcomes for children. All policies and procedures are in place to share information with parents and carers. Practitioner's knowledge and understanding of these documents clearly contributes to their implementation to ensure that children are safe and well cared for. There is a high emphasis on professional development and practitioners regularly attend a range of training opportunities. As a result children benefit from practices which are in line with current ideas and legislation.

Children benefit from a very well-prepared environment that promotes positive outcomes for all children and this contributes significantly to their enjoyment at the setting. Children are happy and confident because practitioners develop warm and caring relationships with them. For example, an effective key worker system ensures that all children's needs are clearly known and met. Rigorous recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that practitioners are suitable and have appropriate skills and knowledge to work with children.

The leadership and management of children in receipt of funding for early education is outstanding. The Lead Practitioner works very well with her team and together they have a clear vision of the high quality childcare and education that they wish to provide. Their wealth of experience and expertise has helped to create a child-centred environment which puts children first. The Lead Practitioner effectively monitors the quality of the nursery education, which ensures that children benefit from the outstanding provision. All practitioners demonstrate a real commitment to continuously developing the setting's practice to ensure that all children have access to outstanding quality learning experiences. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the provider agreed to develop a risk assessment, improve first aid arrangements, keep a record of all visitors and ensure that resources are accessible to children. A thorough written risk assessment, along with a daily check of the premises is now in place; all members of staff now hold a current first aid certificate and a record of visitors is efficiently kept. This means children's safety and well-being is assured. Toys and activities are stored at child height which means that children readily select resources to support and develop their play.

At the last nursery education inspection, the provider agreed to improve creative activities and the programme for communication, language and literacy. Staff's efforts to improve these areas have been effectively addressed. As a result, children experience a good range of opportunities to explore their imagination and creativity, freely accessing many resources to develop their skills. In addition, children's early writing skills are developing very well and they are making excellent progress in this area of learning. This is reflected in this report.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection 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 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 outstanding.

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):

- continue to develop everyday routines so that the younger children benefit from the rich learning experiences.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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