

# Rocking Horse Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY248043
<b>Inspection date</b>	23 April 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Lynne Naylor
<b>Setting Address</b>	35 Norwood Avenue, Southport, PR9 7EQ
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<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Rocking Horse Nursery (Southport) Limited
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 satisfactory. 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?

Rocking Horse Nursery opened in 1988 and was registered to the present owners in 2003. It operates from the ground floor of a detached property close to the centre of Southport. A maximum of 29 children may attend at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday all year round from 08.00 until 18.00. Children have access to an enclosed garden with a range of climbing equipment.

There are currently 55 children on roll. Of these, 17 children receive funding for early education. A qualified manager and seven childcare staff, who hold appropriate early years qualifications, are employed to work with the children. Ancillary staff are also employed.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn about how to keep themselves healthy through daily routines, themed activities and discussions. For example, children are encouraged to practise good routines of personal hygiene, through hand washing after toileting and before eating. Staff talk about healthy options whilst older children make salads and milkshakes and babies try new foods, such as apples, bananas and carrots.

Children are protected from the spread of infection. Staff clean tables before and after meals and practise sound hygiene routines when nappy changing. Accident and administered medication records are completed accurately and signed appropriately by parents.

Children are given a well balanced diet with healthy and nutritious food. Each week, a new menu is devised and displayed for parents to view. Some home cooked foods, from fresh ingredients, are served alongside the frozen foods, for example, fish fingers, mashed potato, broccoli and gravy, ice cream and banana. Children's individual dietary requirements are met well and good routines exist to ensure food is prepared safely and hygienically. Older children help to set the tables, which enhances their independence skills. Water jugs and cups are kept in each room and children are provided with extra drinks when required.

Children follow a rota for use of the garden and play outdoors in the fresh air every day. Older children show good coordination and balance as they use the fixed slide, walk on stilt pots, use the skipping ropes and balls and move imaginatively with streamers on sticks. Indoors, children develop fine motor skills as they manipulate dough and thread beads. Babies have ample space to crawl around and pull themselves up to stand at furniture.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean, warm and welcoming environment. Storage systems have been effectively reorganised so children can access a range of natural and manufactured resources. If children require a sleep or a rest, the provision of cots, beds and bedding is good. Children also rest safely in book areas, which are small but made comfortable with cushions and soft toys.

Although a full risk assessment has not been documented, reasonable arrangements are in place to keep children safe. For example, staff are vigilant and every day they complete a safety checklist in each room. The radiators, although not covered, are checked for temperature daily; the transfer of food from the kitchen is undertaken safely by the cook; and children's independent access to the bathroom is monitored. However, there are some hazards in the garden, which have not been minimised. Good procedures are in place for ensuring children are secure within the building. For example, access to the building is consistently well monitored. Children are satisfactorily involved in learning to keep themselves safe in the setting, as they practise emergency evacuations with staff.

Children are adequately protected from possible abuse or neglect. Staff are aware of signs and symptoms of abuse and understand the procedure they must follow if they have any concerns.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

In the baby room, the presentation of resources, together with more imaginative activities, means babies and young children gain much more from their play. Children throughout the nursery make independent choices and freely access resources, which enhance their all-round development.

Children use their senses to explore natural and manufactured objects, which feel and sound different, provided in 'treasure baskets'. For example, babies show interest in the range of brushes, feeling them over and over again. Children of all ages explore a range of materials, such as water, sand, dough and chinks, and use many different paint techniques. They pour dried lentils and pasta, with increasing skill, from wooden spoons to containers. Children are generally happy and settled in their rooms. Their efforts and achievements are praised adequately, which develops their confidence and self-esteem.

Nursery Education:

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff show confidence in their growing knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage. Organisation of the environment and resources has improved, which significantly increases the opportunities that children have to make independent choices and follow their individual interests. However, it is not clear what children are to learn in each area, consequently, full use is not yet made of routines and activities to promote children's learning. Children happily occupy themselves but are left too much to their own devices, which means they are not sufficiently challenged to develop their ideas.

Methodical progress is being made to develop the pre-school provision. Assessment systems are developing, with staff making some accurate observations of children's progress and using them to identify the next steps in learning. A system to crosscheck that the curriculum is balanced, is being devised.

Most children count confidently to five and recognise simple shapes in everyday objects. They use size language correctly in their play. Children access books to read for pleasure and enjoy group story times. Opportunities for children to develop writing skills and an understanding of different forms of writing are not exploited. Planned activities rely heavily on the tracing of words, whilst activities, such as role play, are not extended to include opportunities to write for a purpose.

Children play imaginatively with small-world toys but the role play areas lack variety and interest. Children have a good sense of time, talking about what happened yesterday. They have many opportunities to learn about planting and growing. Children are developing mouse control at the computer. They occasionally visit places of interest in the community and some activities teach them about the wider world.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Generally, children's needs are appropriately met because key staff caring for them have a good knowledge of their individual needs. However, there are times when less confident children are upset and not directly supported for as long as they require. Children are beginning to appreciate the customs and cultures of others through celebrating festivals and trying different

foods, such as noodles at Chinese New Year. Children's behaviour is exceptionally good. They share, take turns and are polite to each other. Overall, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Well displayed notices and newsletters provide parents with general information about the nursery. Parents receive some useful verbal information and read some written information about their child's day, when they collect their child. Parents are given reasonable information about the nursery education and the curriculum on offer. There are adequate opportunities for discussing progress with parents, for example, in addition to the open-door policy, there is an annual parents evening. Parents' comments on the recent questionnaires are positive about the nursery.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Documentation and records, including the room registers, are accurately maintained to safeguard children. A useful file is being compiled to provide parents with easy access to information about the setting and the curriculum. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed to ensure they contain accurate information. However, the procedure for the recording of complaints is not in line with regulations and the procedure to inform Ofsted of any changes at the earliest opportunity is not effective.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. All the staff hold a relevant childcare qualification and the required minimum staff ratios are met. However, there are times when the deployment of staff does not effectively meet the needs of upset children. Satisfactory use of space allows children to play and move around freely and safely. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Staff have a growing knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage and are beginning to identify and record children's achievements, which provides useful information on which to build the next steps in children's learning. Although useful formal systems to monitor that the curriculum is balanced are being devised, teaching and learning are not yet sufficiently monitored to identify gaps. Consequently, effective use is not yet made of time and resources to promote children's learning in all areas. For instance, prior to meals and snacks, children are expected to sit and wait for considerable lengths of time whilst they take turns using the bathroom. Also, some areas of the room, such as those labelled 'mathematics' and 'mark making', are not used by the children.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

Care:

At the last inspection the nursery was required to devise a statement of procedure to be followed if a parent fails to collect a child. This procedure is now clearly documented and understood by staff.

The setting also agreed to: review the deployment of staff and staffing ratios, taking account of the position of the toilet facilities; extend the range of activities provided, after lunch, for children who are not sleeping; check the floor measurements of the playrooms and review the use of space to ensure that it meets the needs of the children; ensure that the toys are in good condition, can be easily accessed by the children and include positive images of culture and

disability; show in the risk assessment the action taken to minimise the identified risks; and review cleaning schedules to ensure they are effectively followed.

Since the last inspection, all the recommendations have been considered. Part of the garage has been converted to provide useful office space and the old office has been converted to provide a staff room. The floor space was measured, although a record has not been kept in the operational plan, and two of the age groups exchanged rooms. The provision of low-level storage boxes and drawers means children can help themselves to equipment and those not sleeping during the day freely access toys and equipment. Old and worn toys have been discarded and children have access to toys and books that reflect positive images of others.

Hazards identified at the last inspection have been addressed. However, a risk assessment is not available to show the actions taken to minimise all identified risks. A cleaner is now employed and cleaning schedules are effectively followed and monitored, which means children play in a clean environment.

#### Nursery Education:

At the last inspection, the setting was required to: reorganise and then monitor the transition time after lunch; use information from assessment to inform planning; share children's assessment records with parents more frequently and use information that parents share about their children's learning to contribute to those records; and place greater emphasis on children's understanding of addition and subtraction through practical activities.

Satisfactory progress is being made to address these issues. After lunch, children have access to toys and equipment and are no longer required to watch the television. This reorganisation means children's individual learning needs are more effectively met. Assessment and planning systems are developing and useful systems to evaluate whether the curriculum for each child is balanced are also being devised. Each term, parents take home their child's progress records and are invited to make comments to contribute to the records. Children are beginning to use simple addition and subtraction during routine activities, such as calculating how many forks are required at lunch time.

#### **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 complaint 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 satisfactory. 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 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):

- identify, in a risk assessment of the premises, the actions taken to minimise risks and ensure children's use of the bathroom and the outdoor area are included
- ensure staffing arrangements are designed to meet the individual needs of children
- revise the procedure for the recording of complaints, in line with regulations, and implement a procedure to inform Ofsted of any changes at the earliest opportunity.

### **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):

- make effective use of time and resources, including accommodation and staffing, to promote children's learning in all areas. (also applies to care)

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