

Rocking Horse Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	22 June 2007
Inspector	Michele Anne Villiers
Setting Address	RLC NHS Trust, Alder Hey Hospital, Eaton Road, West Derby, Liverpool, Merseyside, L12 2AP
Telephone number	0151 252 5324
E-mail	chris.glover@RLCH-TR.NWEST.NHS.UK
Registered person	NHS Trust
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?

Rocking Horse Nursery is run by the Royal Liverpool Children's National Health Trust. It opened in 1994 and operates from four rooms in a purpose built building. It is situated in the grounds of Alder Hey Children's Hospital in West Derby, Liverpool. A maximum of 60 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 06.45 to 18.00 all year round. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 105 children aged from birth to under five years on roll. Of these, 25 children receive funding for early education. The nursery serves parents who work for the Trust. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 25 members of staff. All staff hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff take positive steps to help promote hygiene and prevent the spread of infection. They follow comprehensive procedures to help protect children from becoming ill. Children learn about personal hygiene. When washing their hands they are reminded to use soap, 'to wash away the germs'. Dental care is demonstrated during role play with giant plastic teeth and a large toothbrush, plus occasional visits to the nearby dental surgery. Children also visit the on site hospital where nursing staff explain about the importance of hygiene and wearing protective clothing.

Children are well nourished and benefit from a nutritious diet. Meal times are relaxed, social occasions and staff set the tables with table cloths, napkins and age appropriate crockery. Children experience different tastes and textures as they tuck into home made meals, such as tuna pasta, and choose from sliced kiwi, orange or melon. Drinking water is made freely available for children to independently access in order to quench their thirst. Children also learn where vegetables come from, and grow their own carrots and lettuce in the small outdoor vegetable plot.

Children develop a very positive attitude to fresh air and physical exercise. They freely move from indoors to the outside play area where they enjoy a variety of activities, playing on wheeled toys and small climbing frames. Staff organise games using bats, balls and hoops, and children enjoy singing and movement as they participate in 'The farmers in his den'. Older children frequently visit a designated children's play area, within the grounds of the hospital, where they access a wide range of challenging apparatus. They skilfully learn to climb rope ladders, large climbing frames and slides, acquiring good balance, strength and coordination. Babies are supported well by staff whilst learning to crawl and walk, helping them to gain good body control.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The premises are secure, helping to keep children safe. All visitors are closely monitored and sign in on arrival. Staff warmly greet the children and parents, creating a welcoming environment. Children access a good range of safe and suitable toys and resources. Particular attention is given to providing suitable furniture for all age groups in order to promote the children's independence.

Safety measures are taken in order to protect children from harm, and risk assessments are regularly conducted by staff. However, the outside play area has some prickly weeds growing, and a broken piece of fence with exposed nails, posing a possible hazard to children. Children learn about safety. On walks and outings staff demonstrate road safety to children and use a circular crossing sign to help children safely cross the road. Children competently discuss the green cross code and know to look and listen for cars. Planned activities further reinforce their learning. They make pretend zebra crossings, and have visits from the local police who demonstrate safety helmets when riding bikes. Children practise the fire evacuation procedure with staff and visit the local fire station.

The children's welfare is further safeguarded as staff have a good awareness of child protection issues. There is a designated coordinator and all staff have received in house training. Babies and toddlers are safely strapped into chairs when necessary, and comfortably sleep in cots. There are two evacuation cots to safely transport young children out of the building in an emergency.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children access a good range of toys and equipment. The environment is interesting and colourful, and babies and toddlers eagerly play with a variety of sensory toys. Staff support the children well, helping them to make good progress in their all round development. Babies become skilful communicators as they respond to the staff's interaction, babbling and attempting to imitate sounds and words. Staff constantly talk to the children, using voice intonation and eye contact to gain their interest. During play babies and toddlers mimic 'hello', and 'bye, bye' on the toy telephone, and 'all gone' when the bowl of fruit is empty. They count with staff, 'one, two three', and clap their hands in rhythm to the sound.

Babies explore different textures, including natural materials, such as wood and metal. Young children enjoy playing in sand and water, and experimenting with paint. They help to make playdough, stirring the mixture and discussing the consistency as it becomes 'gooey', and how the colour changes when adding red paint. Staff plan and provide a wide range of challenging play opportunities. Activities are evaluated and adjusted according to the children's abilities. Staff are knowledgeable about the 'Birth to three matters' framework and effectively use the components to monitor each child's development and progress.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good and children are making effective progress towards the early learning goals. Staff enthusiastically motivate the children, supporting them in small groups and often on a one to one basis. Interesting activities are provided with good use of supporting materials. For example, when studying mini beasts staff introduce story books, photo's, posters, different sized and textured toy insects and small creatures, and create a role play area that represents the jungle. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and use effective planning to ensure activities cover the six areas of learning. Focused activities are evaluated and observation is used to monitor each child's progress and development.

Children happily engage in their play. They initiate interaction with staff and confidently speak in group situation. During registration children recognise their written name cards and then practise drawing around wooden letters, becoming familiar with the alphabet. At story time staff engage children in purposeful conversation. They talk about the current topic, 'Mini beasts', and discuss the life cycle of a butterfly. Children excitedly learn new words, such as 'cocoon' and 'antennae'. They reflect on past events, talking about the snails and spiders children had brought into the nursery. Children are encouraged to express their feelings and staff use good strategies to help children recognise the importance of caring and sharing. The persona doll, Philip, is introduced into the discussion, with some 'sad news' about how he was unable to join in an activity as some children would not share.

Children have many opportunities to observe and explore their environment, examining plants and seasons. They delight in playing in the mud after heavy rain, wearing wellingtons and protective clothing. They learn about animals and have visitors from the farm who bring sheep

and goats with them. Children use their imagination well. They help to create interesting role play areas, and enjoy dressing up. During free play they express their own ideas when painting and making collage pictures. However, during some focused activities children do not always have the opportunity to express and draw their own interpretation, such as when cutting out templates of mini beasts or small creatures. Staff incorporate mathematical concepts into the children's play. They count how many legs a spider has and sing songs, such as 'Peter hammers with one hammer', mimicking the hammer movement and counting to 10 hammers. Children paint ladybirds with the corresponding number of spots for written numerals. They have fun matching and sequence different sized and coloured plastic teddy bears.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children confidently contribute to life in the nursery and develop a strong sense of belonging. They are respected as individuals and their differences acknowledged. For example, parents are invited to talk to the children about their particular religion and festivals, helping children to have respect for other cultures. Children further learn about diversity through some toys and resources. Older children play with different cultural dolls, dolls with walking aids, and some books, puzzles, and games reflecting positive images of race, culture, gender and disability. However, these resources are not fully incorporated into the baby and toddler rooms to help them become aware of the diverse world in which they live.

Children are well behaved, cooperative and polite. Staff act as good role models and effectively resolve any conflicts between children in a calm and consistent manner, using appropriate strategies. There is a positive environment that reinforces good behaviour and children are set clear boundaries. Children share and take turns, and often have the opportunity to take home either Philip and Rhakeeta, one of the persona dolls, to care for. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Parents are welcomed into the nursery at all time, helping children to settle. Information is exchanged through informal daily discussion and regular newsletters. There is a parent notice board and written policies and procedures are clearly displayed. Parents of babies under 12 months of age may take home their daily diary, and staff keep a record of young children's sleep, food intake and nappy change. The partnership with parents of educationally funded children is good. Parents are kept informed about the children's learning programme and may ask to see their child's progress reports. Each year a week is identified where parents may formally meet with their child's key workers. Parents speak very positively about the nursery and the care provided.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

There is a good recruitment and vetting procedure, helping to safeguard children. All staff are qualified and use their skills and knowledge to provide good quality care. Staff are committed to their work and many have worked in the nursery for several years, providing good continuity of care for children. The nursery is committed to encouraging staff to develop their skills and attend training on new initiatives.

All regulatory documentation is in place with comprehensively written policies and procedures for the effective management of the nursery. However, the operational plan does not clearly identify some issues regarding the running of the nursery. For example, it does not outline how

staff are deployed, their specific roles of responsibility, their qualifications and training or how children are grouped. It is not used as a working document that is made freely available to parents.

The quality of leadership and management of the nursery education is good. There is a strong commitment from management to continually improve the care and education for all children. The provision is closely monitored and the manager meets regularly with staff to oversee the planning of activities. Staff meetings and individual development plans identify any staff training needs. Staff receive support from an advisory teacher, and the nursery subscribes to various childcare related educational magazines to help staff keep up-to-date on current issues. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection it was recommended that the nursery staff take steps to implement a procedure for recording incidents of physical restraint. To safeguard children there is now a written policy and procedure for staff to follow with a system in place for the recording of any incidents.

At the last nursery education inspection it was recommended that consideration should be given to improving the development of the monitoring and evaluation of standards. To ensure activities are stimulating and suitable for children, the manager has introduced a more effective system of monitoring the provision through regular staff meetings to discuss activity plans and the educational programme.

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.

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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):

- make inaccessible to children any hazardous materials in the outside play area
- increase the range of toys and resources that reflect positive images of race, culture, gender and disability for the young age range of children attending

- continue to develop the operational plan and use as a working document.

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 children with more opportunities to freely express their own interpretations and ideas during focused activities.

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