

Rascals Preschool Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY274993
Inspection date	02 October 2007
Inspector	Stephen Andrew Blake
Setting Address	Community Centre, Caldbeck Road, Red Lonning, Whitehaven, CA28 6TN
Telephone number	01946 591 373
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Registered person	Rascals Pre-School Nursery
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Rascals Preschool Nursery was established in 1994 and operates from within the community centre located between two residential estates on the outskirts of Whitehaven. A maximum of 26 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 09.15 to 11.45 and 12.30 to 15.00 during school term times. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 48 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 25 children receive funding for early education. The nursery serves children from the immediate and extended areas.

Rascals Preschool Nursery is managed by a voluntary management committee made up of members of the local community and employs a total of six staff. Five staff members hold appropriate early years qualifications and one staff member is working towards qualification.

The setting is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children thrive because staff provide a clean and well-maintained environment and have established effective systems to monitor the medical needs of individual children. Staff follow effective procedures and practices which meet the children's physical, nutritional and health needs. They provide children with a good level of support and guidance to help them gain and develop an age-appropriate understanding of hygiene and personal care.

Children enjoy a range of age-appropriate activities that enable them to explore, test and develop their physical skills. Staff have a sound understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage and a thorough awareness of each child's stage of development. Children are supported effectively by staff as they try new experiences, such as sampling a new food at snack time. All children have a positive attitude to physical exercise and enjoy opportunities to challenge and extend their physical development, for example, when jumping with the space hoppers, balancing on the low beams or using a good range of tools for craft and construction activities.

Children help themselves to easily accessible drinking water throughout the session and enjoy fresh fruit at snack time. Staff effectively monitor children's individual health needs and snacks are planned according to children's dietary requirements. Children are beginning to understand the value of good nutrition as staff use appropriate language, for example, during conversation at snack time.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Risks of accidental injury to children are minimised because staff undertake generally effective risk assessments which help to identify and minimise potential hazards. On one occasion there were too many children using the mini trampoline and this compromised children's safety. Staff have established robust systems to monitor the indoor and outdoor premises to ensure they are safe and secure. They have a good understanding of children's individual abilities and of how to achieve a balance between freedom and setting safe limits. This means that children have opportunities to safely participate in a range of well-planned indoor and outdoor activities.

Children stay safe because staff enable them to independently access a range of good quality toys and equipment which meets safety standards. They implement policies and procedures effectively to help ensure that children are safeguarded. Regular communication with parents contributes to children's safety.

Children are secure because they have a good relationship with the adults caring for them and are confident to ask staff for help when needed. They are well protected by staff who have a clear understanding of child protection policies and procedures and give top priority to children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at Rascals Preschool Nursery. They achieve well because staff use their sound understanding of child development and of early years guidance, such as the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage, to provide good quality care and education. Staff use their knowledge of child development effectively to plan activities and resources that are accessible and age-appropriate in accordance with individual children's abilities.

Children settle quickly on arrival as staff ensure they have good information from parents and carers regarding the child's individual needs for that day. The youngest children make good progress because staff recognise the uniqueness of each child. Close and caring relationships increase children's sense of trust and help them develop a strong sense of self.

Staff support early communication skills effectively through good quality adult-child interactions. Children relate well to each other and have a good relationship with staff. Children begin to make sense of the world and express their ideas as they join in a range of planned activities, for example, when going for local walks or engaged in role-play.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are motivated and challenged as staff provide a good range of accessible resources which support their development across all areas of learning. Children are eager to learn, self assured in their play and confident to try new experiences. They listen intently to stories and participate in favourites such as 'Jack and the beanstalk' and 'Colours for Katie'. Children are using and experimenting with marks readily to represent their ideas and some older children are developing the skills that will enable them to write their own names. Children use their imagination effectively, and are beginning to make sense of the world around them, for example, when going for local walks and receiving visits from adults to talk about their role within the community.

Children work well together. For example, they share resources when using a range of craft materials and take turns to use the outdoor equipment. Older children are confident in using numbers in their play and all respond enthusiastically to challenges to extend their mathematical vocabulary, for example, when counting the bears at the maths table and the number of boys and girls lining up outside. Older children use mathematical language competently, for example, to identify circles, squares and triangles and to describe concepts of full and empty. As a result, children are very confident in their use of numbers during play and respond enthusiastically.

Right from the start, staff find out about children's skills, interests and needs and build on this information to help children achieve as much as they can. As a result, they have a good understanding of individual children's learning needs and abilities. Staff have established effective plans to deliver a varied and challenging programme of continuous learning. The system to monitor individual activities generally works well. However, on one occasion nine children selected the same activity table resulting in congestion and reducing the learning experience for all involved. Staff are perceptive to children's interests during self-initiated play and use questions skilfully to challenge children's thinking and language skills. They have created a very relaxed and supportive learning environment.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed and play a full part in the nursery because staff value and respect their individuality and the family context for each child. Children's behaviour is good because staff implement age-appropriate and sensitive behaviour management strategies. They work well to problem solve with minimum adult intervention and are considerate and helpful towards each other, for example, when offering to share their resources during a craft activity. Children have an appropriate understanding of right and wrong as staff offer gentle reminders to care for each other and talk about the importance of sharing.

Children have a good range of opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world around them through planned activities, visitors to the setting and outings to local places of interest. This positive approach means that children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. This contributes to all children's well-being within the nursery. Parents' views about their child's needs and interests are actively sought before their child starts at the setting, and on a regular basis throughout their time there. Staff ensure that all parents know how their children are developing and progressing and provide parents with an appropriate range of written and verbal information about the nursery. Children benefit from the involvement of their parents in fund raising and on the nursery management committee.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is enhanced because staff have established a well-organised environment conducive to good quality care and education. The quality of leadership and management of nursery education is good.

The premises are well-organised. Indoor and outdoor opportunities are laid out to maximise play and learning opportunities for children. All legally required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being are in place and regularly reviewed.

Children benefit because most staff are qualified and all are skilled. They are effectively inducted and supervised. Staff meet regularly to reflect, monitor and improve the quality of their care and education and are committed to continuous improvement and development. An effective monitoring system ensures that the setting's policies and procedures are consistently applied. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was asked to improve its organisation by ensuring that children's privacy is maintained when toileting and that confidentiality is maintained when recording incidents. The setting was also asked to improve children's safety by maintaining the outdoor area.

Since the last inspection staff have devised and implemented an effective action plan to identify how children's privacy is maintained whilst toileting. They have also devised a confidential system for the recording of incidents. This improves the setting's organisation.

Since the last inspection staff have also devised an effective system for monitoring and maintaining the outdoor play area and this improves children's safety.

Complaints since the last inspection

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. 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.

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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):

- review the risk assessment to ensure that children use the trampoline safely at all times

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):

- review the system for planning activities to ensure they are not overcrowded and restrict children's learning.

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