

# Regents Park Nursery Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	100571
<b>Inspection date</b>	24 September 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Chris Banks
<b>Setting Address</b>	Augustus Street, London, NW1 3TJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7387 2382
<b>E-mail</b>	ssue.willismson@camden.gov.uk
<b>Registered person</b>	Camden Council
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care, Out of School care, Crèche

## 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 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?

Regent's Park Children's Centre was registered in 1994. It is organised and managed by the local authority and operates from purpose built premises on a housing estate in the NW1 area of Camden. The day care provision is open 48 weeks of the year between 08:00 and 18:00.

Other services include family support, a language unit, crèche and drop in facility. The out of school service is not operating at present.

Children mostly attend on a full time basis. The setting supports children who speak English as an additional language. Children with a range of learning difficulties and disabilities are also supported.

There are currently 93 children on roll. Of these, 72 receive a nursery education grant. The nursery centre is registered to care for a maximum of 93 children at any one time.

A team of 27 staff work with the children 21 of whom hold recognised qualifications in early years childcare. Three members of staff are qualified teachers.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in clean and welcoming surroundings. They are well protected from the risk of infection because staff have clear written procedures to follow and also carry out effective hygiene practice. Nappy changing arrangements are well managed and children benefit from the patient encouragement of staff during toilet training. Older children are learning good self care skills. They understand the importance of washing their hands at certain times and are also learning good hygiene practice during meal times. New children are also gradually becoming familiar with their daily routines and when necessary receive gentle reminders from staff about using the bathroom in a responsible way.

Children benefit from the clear sickness policy of the nursery. Staff act in their best interests if they become ill and parents receive written guidance about exclusion periods. They are also immediately alerted about any contagious illnesses. Good account is taken of individual children's overall health care needs. Clear guidance is given to staff about how to safely administer medication to children with chronic or long term conditions and four staff hold valid First Aid certificates. This means they are suitably prepared in the event of any emergency.

Children enjoy nutritious meals and snacks because staff positively promote healthy eating. Menus are well planned in advance and in close consultation with kitchen staff. Older children experience a wide variety of foods which includes fish, pulses, pasta and vegetarian alternatives. They are encouraged to explore how food can contribute to a healthy lifestyle as part of their play activities. Children under two enjoy specially prepared pureed meals.

Physical exercise forms an integral part of children's daily routines. During extended periods of outdoor play, they enjoy the fresh air and have good opportunities to develop their coordination and balancing skills using wheeled toys and climbing apparatus. Children under two benefit from having their own well secured outdoors where they are vigilantly supervised by staff as they explore their surroundings. All children also enjoy using a well equipped soft room and sensory area.

Some children are becoming quietly confident in developing their fine motor skills. They enjoy activities which involve cutting, manipulating tools and using brushes and pencils. They are also becoming confident when using knives and forks at meal times.

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

The provision is good.

Children are looked after in secure surroundings with effective systems in place to help ensure potential safety risks are minimised. Good routine safety procedures such as regular fire drills help protect children and well documented risk assessments are regularly used to highlight and address any concerns.

Effective precautions are also taken to ensure only those adults named and agreed in advance with staff are able to collect children. Where suitability may be in doubt, decisive action is taken by staff to protect children. The identity of visitors is carefully checked and recorded.

Children are well supervised as they move around various areas of the nursery and outdoor space. They are encouraged to behave in a safe way and to consider the safety of others particularly when playing in mixed age groups.

There is a strong commitment to safeguarding the welfare of children. Their safety is positively protected because staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities in child protection. They are familiar with the process for monitoring, recording and reporting concerns and follow clear written procedures. Senior staff are particularly knowledgeable and experienced in this area. The role of Ofsted is made clear and there is also a procedure for dealing with any allegations made against staff.

Children enjoy using an extensive range of safe, reasonably well maintained toys and equipment appropriate to their ages and stages of development. Well organised space with lots of low level storage enables them to be able to help themselves.

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

The provision is good.

Children receive a warm welcome from staff and are comfortable and secure in the setting. Space is very well prepared in advance of their arrival, enabling them to begin each day in a well organised way.

Babies enjoy warm and consistent care from staff who understand their needs well. New babies are gradually settling into their routines because staff encourage gentle separation from parents and provide warm support to all.

Children benefit from staff's understanding of the Birth to three matters framework and their progress is well monitored. Staff keep clear, detailed observational records and use plans well to develop activities to stimulate their interest. They share the enthusiasm of the children when they learn new skills and are developing warm and trusting relationships with children of all ages.

Toddlers aged between two and three years benefit from the opportunity to mix and make friends with older children during outdoor play. They are well integrated and enjoy impromptu circle times where they sing action rhymes and songs.

Toys, equipment and resources are varied and appropriate for children's ages and stages of development. There is a good choice of arts and craft materials, puzzles, construction toys, books, dressing up clothes and home play equipment. Outdoors is also well equipped with wheeled toys, a music area and garden.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Key staff are well trained and demonstrate a good understanding of the Foundation Stage. They plan and provide a stimulating and enjoyable range of activities which effectively covers each area of learning. This helps ensure children make good progress in reaching their early learning goals before they go to school. The overall progress of children is well monitored and staff have a good understanding of how they are developing. They record clear and succinct observations of children and the system for evaluation takes good account of the very wide and contrasting abilities of children.

Children are learning key social skills such as sharing and taking turns. They are mostly considerate towards each other and are learning to co-operate well. Children who are inexperienced at developing relationships with others are gradually becoming more sociable because staff take time to explain the benefits of being part of a group. Staff also successfully encourage the participation of less confident children in outdoor activities where they join staff and younger peers in impromptu 'sing-along's'.

Older children show good concentration during activities and listen attentively to stories. They are enthusiastic contributors and often ask challenging questions. They enjoy looking at books independently and as they sit in a companionable group also invent their own imaginative storylines.

Children have good opportunities to practice their early writing skills in a range of ways but not all areas are sufficiently well resourced. Every day activities such as tidying away and preparing for lunch provides good learning opportunities for children. They are asked to count and recognise various shapes and colours and also attempt to identify the labelling of each place setting. This also encourages them to play a productive part in nursery routines.

Children are developing a meaningful understanding of the natural world around them. In the outdoor area they grow a range of vegetables and herbs such as green beans, potatoes and coriander and also examine and follow the life cycles of various animals. Activities associated with the world of information technology is not quite as well developed because it is not strongly promoted in the overall setting.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are highly regarded because staff have an excellent understanding of their individual needs and respond to them very well. Extremely detailed information is gathered and recorded about children before each placement because home visits are a vital part of the settling in process. Where necessary, interpreters and translators are used to ensure information is effectively shared.

Following this meeting with parents, information is successfully used to plan for the child's first few months at the nursery. Children are settled in gradually and with great sensitivity by each 'key' worker who adopts a family friendly approach because they understand a parent's anxiety about separation. Staff strongly respect the feelings of children and parents who may also be settling in to a complete new lifestyle. They engage with all children in a caring and comforting way and support them well during their transition.

Parents are kept very well informed about their child's progress in a range of ways. Informative and detailed reports are compiled and shared with them on a regular basis. Lots of images are used in reports and the user friendly format is valued by parents. The progress of new younger children is shared with parents on a daily basis. This takes the form of a diary which is kept by key workers in the baby room.

Partnership with parents is outstanding. They are considered valued partners in helping all children understand different backgrounds, beliefs and traditions. Staff encourage them to become involved in children's learning in very practical ways, most recently by celebrating a less well known Chinese lunar festival. A range of other dates in the festival calendar are also

celebrated, including the Jewish New year and Christian Harvest Festival. Parents also benefit from 'in house' support services which includes various parenting classes.

Children see their own and others background positively portrayed throughout the setting. Images and resources positively reflect diversity and a good range of anti discriminatory books, toys and equipment help younger children begin to acknowledge difference. This helps fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

There is a very strong commitment to providing an inclusive service. Children with learning difficulties, disabilities and complex needs are extremely well integrated and benefit from excellent partnership working with parents and outside agencies which helps positively promote their overall health and welfare. Children also benefit from having a specialist language unit on site to support their communication and language development.

All children express themselves very freely, secure in the knowledge they will receive a consistent, patient response from staff. Their calm, measured intervention when behaviour occasionally becomes difficult is especially important as a few new children find it difficult to control their more extreme emotions. Some children display open acts of kindness. They comfort their friend who is finding it difficult to settle by saying in a quiet reassuring voice "mummy come soon"

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management of the setting is good.

Children are cared for by a well qualified and experienced staff team who are committed to further developing their professional skills. Key staff keep well informed about new initiatives in the regulation of childcare and education and are already familiar with the new Early Years Foundation Stage.

There is a demonstrated commitment to continually improve their service for children and families. A comprehensive action plan with clearly identified areas for improvement is in place and alternative ways of evaluating childcare practice are also being considered.

Clear and comprehensive written policies and procedures relating to children's health and safety are effectively put into practice. Some improvement to record keeping arrangements is required to ensure the arrival and departure time of all children is consistently recorded. The complaints procedure also requires further development to ensure it fully meets requirements.

Staff are knowledgeable about their roles and responsibilities and work very well together to create a warm and happy atmosphere for children. Children benefit from being cared for in a comfortable, welcoming environment with sufficient space for the number of children the setting is registered to care. It is organised in a child friendly way and is accessible to children who use wheelchairs. Art and craft areas attached to each room are well resourced. The soft playroom and sensory area is also an asset to children.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Following the last inspection, the provider was required to ensure all staff consistently follow the correct procedure for the administration of medication. Action was taken by the manager to ensure the procedure was properly followed by all staff.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection, there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to taken 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**

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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):

- ensure the arrival and departure time of all children is consistently recorded
- further develop the complaints procedure to ensure details of Ofsted are included

#### **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):

- improve resources and opportunities for children to develop their knowledge and understanding of information technology
- ensure there are sufficient resources in all areas for children to practice their early writing skills.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)