

# Heather Rabbit Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique Reference Number** 507849  
**Inspection date** 14 January 2008  
**Inspector** Loraine Wardlaw

**Setting Address** Heather Row Cottage, Heather Row, Nately Scures, Hook, Hampshire,  
RG27 9JP

**Telephone number** 01256 763227

**E-mail**

**Registered person** Rosemary Ward

**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](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?

Heather Rabbit Nursery opened in 1985. It is privately owned and managed and operates from the owner's private house. It is located in a quiet rural location in Nately Scures, near Hook, Hampshire. The nursery serves the surrounding villages and towns. Children have the use of the main playroom and various secure gardens, with the occasional use of two sitting rooms and conservatory.

The nursery are registered to care for 20 children and there are currently 43 children, from three to five years, on roll. This includes 41 funded three and four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of half and whole day sessions. The setting is able to support children who have learning difficulties/disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week for 34 weeks a year, during school term times. For those children receiving the education grant, sessions are from 09:15 until 12:00, 12:15 until 15:00 hours, or 09:00 until 15:00 if they attend all day. When staying for a full day or afternoon session children bring their own packed lunches.

The owner/manager employs nine part-time staff to work with the children including bank staff and a peripatetic Kodaly music teacher. The owner/manger and seven staff are qualified in early years to National Vocational Level 2 and above. One member of staff is currently attending a training programme. The setting receives support from the Local Authority and attends cluster group meetings with other local pre-schools and schools.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children's physical development is exceptionally well planned because children can spend as much time in the outdoors as they wish which contributes greatly to their health. Children enjoy the freedom of the successfully organised, outdoor environment, gaining fresh air and exercise in all weathers, because staff make excellent use of the rural surroundings. Children have lots of fun as they run and splash excitedly, wearing their wellies and wet weather trousers, through the large puddles on their way to the woods. Challenging climbing and balancing apparatus and wheeled toys, encourages children to develop their skills, along with the slippery slopes they confidently tackle and puddles they jump over in the garden. They are keen and eager to learn to ride the nursery's pony 'Mickey' which is a popular outdoor activity. Children use a good variety of tools confidently such as when they skilfully cut paper with scissors, use pipettes and child size garden tools to dig the garden. Children's nutritional needs are well met because staff have regard to providing healthy snacks such as fruit and have a good system to record children's dietary requirements. Mr Mc Gregor's garden features highly in the children's activities; it is an exceptionally well planned garden which encourages the children to learn about where food comes from. They help to grow potatoes, broad beans, strawberries and rhubarb all of which they taste at different times of the year. Children also help to make goats cheese from the goat's milk. Children's personal hygiene practises are well promoted by staff; children constantly wash their hands and have a good knowledge of why they need to do this. Their welfare is maintained because staff keep thorough accident and medication records.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for and play in a safe and highly exciting, welcoming environment. The outdoor play space is particularly well set up to stimulate children's interest offering them the chance to take risks but within safe parameters. An extensive set of risk assessments have been undertaken by the designated safety officer for regular on site and off site activities such as the annual canal trip. Also an extensive daily indoor and outdoor checklist is undertaken by staff to ensure the setting continues to remain safe to receive children. Staff regularly monitor the group's accident book and take action when they feel necessary; for example, they install door guards on the toilet doors to prevent children pinching their fingers. Children themselves learn about how to stay safe. When out on their walks they are able to identify mushrooms or toad stalls that may be poisonous and know it is not a good idea to wave the safety knife around when using it to cut up the apples. Children play with a good selection of safe toys and resources appropriate for their age and stage of development. They are well protected from possible abuse because staff are confident about the child protection procedure and training in this area of their work is seen as a priority.

## Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children have lots of fun and enjoyment during their time at the nursery; they are very happy and have a positive attitude to learning. New children settle swiftly and easily because they are well supported by the caring and understanding staff. Children are involved, motivated and engage in a wealth of practical, developmentally appropriate, indoor and outdoor activities. For example, children spontaneously role play in the outdoor play house pretending to have a party or use the tools to 'paint' the house with water. Other children select the garden tools from the potting shed and dig holes in the soil in the rain; the weather conditions not hindering their play. Indoors they select activities of their choosing and have opportunities to concentrate well; such as when a child spends a long time making their three dimensional model, 'shiny' with sticky backed paper. Children relate well to staff who interact with children sympathetically and positively. However, there is less emphasis by staff to engage children in a range of learning opportunities during the snack time routine, which results in some children becoming restless.

### Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Overall, children are making good progress towards the early learning goals, because teaching is rooted in a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and a clear understanding of how young children learn and develop. The manager and staff provide a very stimulating environment to children. Staff use varied and on occasions innovative teaching methods to ignite children's interests, such as when they dress up in the colourful, long 'Tale coat', walk into the garden or woods and tell children an old tale from the past. Staff have a good knowledge of the children's capabilities and key workers have loose learning objectives for key children, which they incorporate into the children's free play; however, these objectives are not written down. There is a clear and succinct system in place to record children's progress through the stepping stones but these are not consistently supported by effective, observational evidence nor are they used to systematically inform the next steps in children's learning.

Children engage easily in conversations with others; they are inquisitive and often ask lots of questions to gain knowledge. For example, when Barnaby the owner's remaining puppy visits the children, they stroke him lovingly and ask many questions about the puppy and his parents. Staff promote children's thinking skills by asking good open ended questions and extend children's vocabulary such as when they tell the children the different names of the different types of apple they are eating; braeburn, coxes and granny smith. Children are learning to write emergently; some correctly form the letters of their name on paper. They can recognise their names at self registration and are attentive listeners during story time in the outside playhouse. Children demonstrate an ability to count during their free play, when challenged by the inspector, but there is less emphasis from the staff to promote children's mathematical skills. Particularly in the area of problem solving and the recognition of numerals during free play and the routine. Children demonstrate that they can recognise two dimensional shapes such as circle and diamond, can compare the size of hand prints and enjoy maths activities such as weighing 'Spike' the guinea pig, plotting the weight on a graph and measuring how far their paper aeroplanes fly. Children enjoy weekly, well planned music sessions from a peripatetic teacher; they sing unusual songs in loud and squeaky voices and use shakers while the teacher plays a slow or quick tune on the recorder, developing their sense of beat and rhythm. They explore paint using paint brushes and their hands and on occasions other mediums such as 'gloop'. Children are able to design and create their own models and pictures from collage and recyclable materials such as when children build a 'mini' or an aeroplane. Children have excellent opportunities to find out

about nature and living things; they observe the slow worm excitedly, find and handle their own worms in the garden and learn to take care of the animals which live at the nursery such as the rabbit, guinea pig, goat and 'Mickey' the pony. Children help with hay making, and talk to and observe the many visitors to the nursery such as the chimney sweep, sheep shearer and bee keeper. They have a good sense of time as they observe first hand the different seasons; they walk through the high ferns in the summer and make comments about them in the autumn when they turn brown and wilt.

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

The provision is good.

Children are valued and respected by the staff who are aware of their individual needs and who are pro-active in ensuring all children are included. For example, a special horse seat is purchased so that all children can experience riding 'Mickey' the nursery's pony. Children develop a positive attitude to others in society through the images they see and play with at the nursery and the visitors which challenge stereotypes such as the lady vet. Overall, children are well behaved and well mannered; they often say 'excuse me' when they want to pass by someone. They receive praise and encouragement from staff when they do well at an activity. Children are developing successfully in their personal independence; they operate independently in the setting, access the toilet when they need to and are learning to put their outdoor clothes on with minimal assistance. Children have a very good sense of belonging because of the many animals at the nursery. For example, a four-year-old looks at the group nursery picture and talks fondly about the nursery's dog Pegatty and the puppies she had just before Christmas. Children develop good relationships with the staff and their peers. Parents write positively and knowingly, about many aspects of the nursery when they are consulted through the annual questionnaire. The manager and staff respond to suggestions made by parents of any improvements that can be made. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents of children receiving nursery education is good. Staff build strong relationships with parents because they are friendly, approachable and communicate regularly with them about the children's care and education. Good systems are in place which helps with the initial transition from home to nursery such as a home visit and 'adventure club' for parent and toddlers. Parents are able to view the groups policies and are regularly issued with newsletters and planning documents; the latter is available by e-mail. New parents are invited to a parents evening where staff talk about the curriculum and all the learning that can take place at one specific activity such as cooking. Parents are able to attend formal parent consultation sessions, where they discuss their child's developmental progress through the Foundation Stage with staff and view their child's record of achievement. However, discussing children's 'next steps' in learning with parents is very informal and not written down.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children experience a home from home, unique environment where they are supported by caring and sympathetic staff. They benefit from a stimulating, well organised nursery with staff who work very well as a team to successfully promote the outcomes for children. Good staff to child ratios are kept which ensures that children have suitable supervision. Documentation and records are up to date, thorough, complete and easily available for inspection. New and unqualified staff have a very good induction which incorporates having an experienced mentor

which they can turn to if needed. A good recruitment and vetting procedure is in place which includes criminal record bureau checks to ensure staff are safe to work with children. New staff receive a comprehensive handbook of policies and procedures which underpin their practice. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management of nursery education is good. The owner/manager leads by example and is a keen, committed and professional practitioner. Staff have clearly defined responsibilities, with all staff contributing to the curriculum plans. The manager and staff have devised an action plan with targets to ensure the setting is constantly looking at improving its practice. Staff regularly meet as a team to discuss issues and children's progress. All staff complete peer on peer observations to evaluate teaching practice and attend short training courses to update their knowledge and skills. They then cascade the knowledge gained to the rest of the staff team.

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

At the last inspection the setting were requested to record fire drill details in the attendance register. The setting keeps up to date records of fire drills which are evaluated keeping children safe in an emergency. They were also requested to include Ofsted's address in the complaints procedure, which has now been updated.

At the last nursery education inspection the nursery were requested to encourage children to write for a purpose and to use books to support their activities. Pencils and note books are located around the nursery for children to practice their emergent writing and books and reference sheets are used during activities, such as when the children go for walks and look out for different birds. The nursery were also requested to provide opportunities for use of communication and information technology equipment. Children have a computer to work on and technological toys such as the bee bot and radio controlled bug which they confidently manoeuvre forwards and backwards. The nursery were also requested to encourage children to develop their own ideas in craft and modelling. There are now increased opportunities for children to design and build with a variety of materials which develops their creativity. The final nursery education recommendation was to share with parents children's assessment records and planned learning opportunities to help involve them in their children's learning. Parents are able to view the planned learning activities and are invited in regularly to see their child's assessment records.

### **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 good.

## 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):

- improve the organisation of snack time by maximising the teaching and learning opportunities for children.

### **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):

- ensure children's assessment records are supported by anecdotal observations and these are used to systematically inform children's next steps in learning and share these with parents
- increase opportunities for children to problem solve and recognise numerals in free play and the daily routine

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)