

Radford Royal Naval Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	117219
Inspection date	12 September 2007
Inspector	Leoarna Mathias
Setting Address	Stokingway Close, Plymstock, Plymouth, PL9 9JL
Telephone number	01752 481152
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Registered person	Radford Royal Naval Pre School
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?

Radford Royal Naval Pre-School opened in 1985. It has sole use of a purpose built pre-fabricated building. There is a large secure outdoor play area. The pre-school is situated approximately seven miles from Plymouth city centre, on a Royal Navy Estate and serves the local community.

The pre-school opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions last from 09:05am to 11.35am Monday to Friday and from 12:35 hours to 15:05 hours, Monday to Thursday. A lunch club runs from 11:35am to 12:35pm. There are 52 children currently on roll, including 26 who are in receipt of nursery education funding. The setting supports children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The setting is run by the Royal Naval Pre-school Learning Organisation, who employ nine members of staff, all of whom hold suitable Early Years qualifications. The group receives support from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are developing a good understanding of what it means to be healthy, as a result of a strong range of measures undertaken by the staff. For example, snack contains many healthy items, and children receive consistent encouragement to try new foods. They also readily access drinking water. Toilet areas are pleasing and support children's efforts in becoming independent in their personal care; staff also monitor children's use of this area, promoting hand washing particularly well, having children quickly learn the importance of this practice. Staff are diligent in their application of hygienic procedures for the preparation of food and carrying out nappy changing, and when taken overall, the setting is kept in an orderly and hygienic fashion throughout the session. The majority of staff are first aid trained, as well as having completed a range of other training that promotes the health of the children effectively. Most documentation systems that promote the medical health of children, such as accident records, and medicine administration records, are kept in good order, with only minor amendments to the system for gaining parental consent for emergency medical advice and treatment being necessary in order to bring it fully in line with the National Standards.

Children access plentiful amounts of physical play, both indoors and out. The group have recently brought about great improvements to the outside play area, and as a result, weather permitting, children have very regular access to this valuable resource. As a result their physical skills are developing well, with children making very good use of slides, stilts, hoops and large construction toys. There are also planting areas that allow children to develop an understanding of how things grow.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children's safety is particularly well promoted during their time at the setting. Access to the setting is closely monitored, and visitors are quickly recorded and given safety information, as well as being introduced to the children. Procedures for managing the arrival and departure of children work well in practice, and the group have worked closely with families to ensure that there is an appreciation of the need to only have named individuals collecting children. Fire safety is a clear priority for the group, and staff employ very effective strategies for having the children understand the risk of fire, and the course of action they must follow if the alarm sounds. As a result, children can talk confidently about what to do in an emergency, and the 'fake fire' is used during the very regular fire drills to encourage children to think for themselves about points of exit. Risk assessment is thorough and frequent, and hazards are minimised very promptly. High ratios of adults to children mean that they are vigilantly supervised at all times. Children are also increasingly able to identify hazards for themselves, as staff take the time to sensibly and carefully explain why certain courses of action might be dangerous. Finally, the group has a clear approach to child protection issues. All members of staff receive regular training in this area, and are confident in the procedures to be followed should concerns arise. Incident recording procedures work well in practice, and a comprehensive policy is in place. As a result, the welfare of all children is effectively safeguarded while they attend the setting.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Very warm relationships between children and staff are in evidence. Settling in procedures are strong, and even the youngest and newest children settle quickly to activities. All children readily gravitate to adults for comfort, help, support and to share achievements. Daily routines are established and shared so that they are quickly learned by the children, and as a result, children are confident, happy and secure throughout their attendance. Staff have made good use of the Birth to three matters framework in order to ensure that the youngest children receive appropriately structured activities, and that their learning and development is as closely monitored as that of the children receiving nursery education funding.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children give their full concentration to both self-chosen and adult-led tasks, such as completing jigsaws, manipulating playdough, or using information technology resources. They are curious about the activities they participate in, and through their discussions with peers and adults demonstrate high levels of initiative, imagination and co-operation. Their self-esteem is well promoted, as their work is pleasingly displayed and staff value children's contributions to the planning of activities. Children are also learning quickly to share, take turns and to follow the agreed codes of the group. They are keen to help at tidy up time, and enjoy being given responsibility to carry out tasks. They show genuine concern and affection for each other, and use good manners with very little prompting. Finally, taking part in harvest festivals and Christmas celebrations, for example, gives children a growing sense of what it means to be part of their local community.

Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals in all six areas of learning. Children are confident conversationalists, and are frequently encouraged to use language for thinking through their problems, such as how we might make the large construction bricks into a house, or why we need to wash our hands. Children access regular teaching around sounds and letters, as well as taking part in regular song singing which consolidates this learning. The use of books is effectively promoted, and children very much enjoy story times. Similarly, opportunities to make marks, and practice handwriting, are frequent, and their levels of achievement are closely monitored. Children are cared for in a number rich environment, and most opportunities to promote and consolidate children's understanding of number, sequence and problem solving are taken. They also access a pleasing range of resources that increase their understanding of shape, size and colour. Children's curiosity about the world around them is well developed, and they participate in regular activities that sustain their interest, such as visits from young lambs and raising chicks in an incubator. They also have a strong sense of the passage of time, both through daily strategies that encourage children to think about the content of their day, and through interesting projects such as 'all about me', where children think about what they can do now that they could not do as babies. Children also have plentiful opportunities to develop an appreciation of the difference and diversity in society, as they access activities that give them insight into how other people live, the languages they speak, and where they come from. For example, the children have had a number of responses to their messages in bottles, some in languages not their own. Children access a range of resources that promote the development of their manipulative skills, such as paint brushes, play dough, small world imaginative play resources and peg boards. They make good use of the space around them and move with purpose, confidence and co-ordination. Children also have many opportunities to design, make and explore media and materials through interesting art and craft based projects, and staff are able to encourage children's imaginations and self expression

through these tasks. Music features regularly in the programme, as does role play, which is fostered particularly skilfully by staff who know how to enter into children's worlds and draw out their fullest participation.

Staff possess a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum, and as such are able to plan an interesting range of varied and purposeful activities. They are skilled in engaging children in activities and extending their interest, and only very occasional opportunities to promote children's learning and understanding are not taken up. Staff make good use of time, space and resources, ensuring that their own deployment maximises children's access to adult support for their learning, as well as ensuring that a good range of activities is on offer at every session. Observation and assessment systems are thorough, and as a result, the staff team are increasingly able to tailor the programme to meet the learning needs of the children attending, to be flexible, and to evaluate their delivery.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff work hard to meet the individual needs of the children attending, and to value their contribution to the running of the group. There are clear policies for equal opportunities and special educational needs that work well in practice. The staff team are keen to help children understanding the nature of difference and diversity in the world around them through meaningful activities, using postcards home from fathers serving overseas to prompt discussions about how life is in other parts of the world. Children also learning simple signing, and have enjoyed visits from hearing dogs and guide dogs. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are cared for by a competent Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, who is able to assist children effectively in accessing the support of outside agencies and to work with closely with families to ensure positive outcomes for these children. All children receive strong encouragement to give of their best and behave well while attending; staff are consistent in their use of praise and encouragement, and children respond positively to the sensible rewards systems the staff employ. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

The partnership with parents is good. An informative notice board, regular newsletters, a detailed prospectus and regular questionnaires all serve to give parents plentiful information about the running of the group, as well as giving them opportunities to make suggestions for improvement. They also attend half-termly meetings with their child's key worker, giving them access to records of progress and enabling them to discuss the next steps in their child's learning fully, as well as accessing a diary system that provides more regular information about their child's significant achievements.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The pre-school meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. High ratios of adults to children mean that children receive ample support for their care and learning needs. Systems for appointment, vetting and induction work well in practice, and staff are clear about their responsibilities, giving children access to adults who are secure and confident in their roles. Commitment to ongoing professional development is also very much in evidence, as support for training is considerable. Documentation which supports all aspects of children's welfare or meets regulatory requirements is in good order, with only minor amendments to the

complaints policy necessary to bring it fully in line with the expectations of the National Standards.

The leadership and management is good. Good practice is effectively shared across the five provisions run by the Royal Navy through regular meetings, and the over-seeing co-ordinator provides particularly strong support to all staff. The group's leader, though relatively new in post, has introduced a good number of improvements to the way in which the group is managed. This is paying particular dividends in terms of the professional development of the whole staff team, as they now more fully participate in the planning and evaluation of activities, as well as the day-to-day administrative tasks that are to be completed. Evaluating all aspects of the programme is now a clear priority, and this in turn leads to a commitment to continuous improvement that all adults share.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group were asked to improve children's access to healthy items at snack time; to increase opportunities to make independent use of books; to extend the support for children's mathematical understanding; to increase children's opportunities for learning about other cultures and to improve their access to physical play. Snack is now very much focussed on healthy eating, and the book corner is inviting and accessible. Staff make more of the opportunities to promote mathematical understanding, while acknowledging that there is more to be done in this area. However, teaching that promotes knowledge of other cultures has improved considerably, and the now daily access to physical play opportunities means that when taken overall, the provision now more successfully promotes positive outcomes for children.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints received by Ofsted that required the provider of 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):

- ensure that the system for requesting parental consent for the seeking of emergency medical advice and treatment is rigorous

- ensure that the complaints policy meets the requirements of the National Standards

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):

- further develop staff confidence in using all incidental and planned learning opportunities to promote children's development, particularly in the area of mathematical understanding

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