

Ridings Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	206845
Inspection date	19 October 2007
Inspector	Georgina Walker
Setting Address	The Old School, Flood Street, Ockbrook, Derbyshire, DE72 3RF
Telephone number	01332 670808
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Registered person	The Trustees of Ridings Pre-School
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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Ridings Pre-School opened in 1967. It operates from the old village school in Ockbrook,

Derbyshire. There is a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The pre-school serves the village and surrounding area.

The setting opens five days a week during school term only. Sessions are from 09:00 to 11:30 Monday to Friday and 12:45 to 15:15 Monday to Thursday. A lunch club operates between sessions on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

The pre-school is registered to care for 26 children and there are currently 62 children from two years one month to four years on roll. This includes 32 children who receive funding for early education. The setting currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs 10 part-time staff who work with the children. Over half of the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority

and are members of the Pre-school Learning Alliance. The pre-school is managed by trustees and a parental committee, who delegate day to day responsibility to the staff.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is generally promoted. Staff ensure the prevention of accidents is reduced as they are vigilant and aware of stages of children's development and how to minimise risks in the setting. However, some records have incomplete detail to meet children's needs if a further injury occurs and significant injuries a child arrives with are not always recorded or signed by parents. This does not consistently safeguard children. The accident records are, however, maintained in an effective system with confidentiality a priority. All accidents are thoroughly monitored to ensure a pattern is not forming. Staff hold appropriate first aid certificates and maintain first aid boxes on site and for taking on outings. However, some contents are not sterile and not all dressings assist in the prevention of allergic reactions. The seeking of permission for administering medication and treatment in the event of an emergency is sought for all children on admission. Medication is stored in a locked cupboard to ensure children have no access.

Children learn the importance of personal hygiene as they become increasingly independent in their personal care. They are accompanied to the toilet by staff, who give timely reminders as the children follow appropriate daily routines, such as washing their hands before snacks and after toileting or messy play. Older children carefully explain to younger ones that they must use soap to wash their hands and show them how to use the dispenser. Exemplary hygiene practices are followed by staff for changing children who attend in nappies. Staff use gloves and aprons each time and privacy is created with the use of a 'shower' curtain across the room. Children's noses are wiped appropriately to prevent the risk of cross-infection and many independently obtain and use their own tissue and dispose of it safely in the bin. In the event of children becoming ill staff instigate the well-documented procedures and parents are contacted to ensure any distress is limited.

Children benefit from the significantly varied and nutritious menu provided which further assists in promoting their healthy lifestyle. Children are starting to understand why certain foods are good for them through discussion and programmed activities. The menu is displayed which assists in sharing information with parents. Staff ensure the café style snack time is a social time and provide encouragement to eat healthily. They have discussions, especially when the food relates to the topics or seasons, such as when eating plums. Snack times are enjoyed when new tastes are offered and children choose from the range of food, such as rice cakes or breadsticks, milk or water. They serve themselves competently and co-ordination skills are developed further as they spread cheese on the rice cakes. Individual dietary requirements are shared with the staff by parents to ensure children remain healthy and dietary or religious needs are met. Lunch club meals are provided by parents who generally respond to staff requests to ensure the contents of the lunch box includes healthy options. Boxes are stored appropriately and parents are made aware some items can be stored in the refrigerator if necessary.

Children thrive as they enjoy an extensive range of physical activities and have regular opportunities for fresh air and exercise. They are supported effectively to develop their physical skills through meticulously planned and spontaneous activities. They move with confidence and an awareness of personal safety throughout the premises. There are daily opportunities

for children to play outdoors, even if it is raining a little and especially in the snow, where photographs show how delighted the children are to do this. Hopper balls, stilts and stepping stones used enthusiastically by the children show how extremely competent they are on each type of resource from the regular usage. They organise themselves and one child uses a plastic corn-on-the-cob as a microphone to tell a group of four other children which colour stepping stone to jump onto. They respond and lots of giggles are heard as more than one child tries to stand on small, purple shapes. Balancing, crawling and climbing frame equipment is used as planned obstacle courses or free play activities on a rotational basis. Wheeled toys ensure children develop high levels of pedalling skills and confidence. They delight in music and movement sessions, ring and parachute games. Their finer manipulative skills and control is actively encouraged through interesting craft activities. Regular use of small tools such as pencils, paint brushes and a wide variety of construction toys, help children develop their skills competently. Their scissor skills are excellent as many cut out their own craft work for displays or take the finished work home. Occasionally the children are taken off the premises for a walk to a number of locations in the village.

The promotion of planned activities under the 'Birth to three matters' framework, for children who attend from the age of two, is fully integrated into the planning. The children are eager to make choices from the wide range of stimulating activities presented each session. Staff are proficient in addressing individual needs and ensuring good health and emotional well-being as the child settles in the pre-school and develops movement skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Comprehensive policies, procedures and risk assessment documents exist and the staff have a sound awareness of how to promote children's safety throughout the premises. However, two potential hazards are stored in the outdoor play area. Emergency procedure evacuations, and subsequent recording and evaluations, are undertaken to ensure children's safety. Children are secure in the environment. Very good security and collection procedures are maintained. Parents contribute to the registration process and children also make a mark on a sheet of paper on a clip board, becoming confident to write as they develop awareness of the letters in their name. Staff mark and check registers effectively and there is an additional visitors book to show who is also on the premises at any given time, to assist in safeguarding the children. Children's safety is promoted effectively on walks locally to further their learning experiences. Written permission is sought for each activity and the outings policy meticulously followed.

The environment in which the children are cared for is warm and welcoming, and enhanced as soft music plays in the background. The pre-school have sole use of the premises and take the opportunity to decorate it with children's craft work, posters and an extensive range of useful information for parents and staff to refer to. Planning and information about the early learning goals and 'Birth to three matters' framework are displayed. The children have access to a stimulating and extensive range of resources which are changed to promote age-appropriate levels of challenge. All resources are safe and presented at suitable levels to encourage independence and development and ensure children are supported to progress rapidly in appropriate surroundings. Children make choices regarding what they would like to play with from the interesting range presented and they play and learn with worthwhile activities. They have free access to a range of resources in the 'children's choice' area which include scarves, a wooden train set and finger puppets. Children help to tidy up before group singing time, prompted by the sound of loud music playing, demonstrating an understanding of routine and how to care for resources.

Children are cared for by staff who have a sound knowledge of signs and symptoms of abuse and demonstrate a considerable understanding of how to give priority to children's welfare. The parents are well informed of the pre-school's responsibility to protect children. Changes to local authority procedures with regard to the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures are included in the comprehensive policies and on the flow chart of reporting processes and all the documents are made available to parents. Staff attend ongoing training to ensure they are fully informed of changes to practice and where to contact the relevant social services staff to make a referral.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children settle quickly in the pre-school and have a friendly relationship with the staff, who encourage the children to separate from their parents and access the exceedingly well-presented activities. The children are confident and keen to join in the interesting range of different activities presented each session. Great concentration is shown and an eagerness to spend extended periods in something which stimulates, such as creating a collage of a rainbow fish, relating to the stories of the week. Children's developmental progress is promoted exceptionally well and they flourish as staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework. The observations are evaluative to fully assist with planning for developing children's individual needs and intellectual capabilities. Staff consistently interact and monitor the children's progress effectively as they know each child very well as a starting point is provided by the parents on a comprehensive document. Developmental progress is documented thoroughly and the staff share written and photographic evidence with parents regarding their child.

All children become purposefully occupied in topics, such as 'colours, shapes and patterns'. Parents are aware of themes and potential links, for example 'traditional stories'. Children rapidly learn to share resources with other children, staff and visitors. The staff are creative in introducing interesting ways for children to learn and enjoy the themes. Tasting food from around the world is included or meeting 'people who help us' by arranging for the fire service to bring an engine to the car park at the village hall and taking the children to meet the fire officers. The children develop appropriate socialisation skills as they join in group activities and move between the resources. This ensures the children are purposefully occupied and are supported to develop their potential with rapid progress. Children are eager to engage in the opportunities to manipulate malleable materials. They enjoy feeling dough with silver glitter in and learn about shape as they use the substantial range of different shaped cutters.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff are highly effective at making sure that outcomes for children are excellent and children make outstanding progress towards the early learning goals. Achievements are exceptional in relation to their starting points and capabilities. By the time they go to school they are ready, well prepared and confident to accept the transition to their new environment. Staff record comprehensive detail on weekly planning documents consistently demonstrating they have an excellent knowledge and understanding of the stepping stones, early learning goals and how they will present activities. These provide a well-balanced, broad programme and there is evidence of differentiation. Focus activities include excellent ideas and are linked skilfully to the themes. These are effectively evaluated as are other observations. This ensures children benefit from the learning experience to fully assist with planning for their individual future progress. Children's learning is skilfully extended as the pre-school have successfully developed the practice of having a key-worker for each

child. This enables staff to progress specific learning and challenge children to think about what they know as staff consistently ask open-ended questions, which children think about and respond to. A variety of methods are used to help children learn effectively. Staff manage the children proficiently, with precise reminders why they must not shout out at group times or others will not hear. Children understand snack and outdoor playtime takes place at certain times and are willing to help tidy up. Children's progress is verbally shared daily with parents. Written information in the folders is available at any time and always at the end of each term. Copies of the end of term summary are sent to parents who are unable to attend the open evening where progress and targets for next term are shared. Topics are enthusiastically enjoyed by the children who, when introduced to the topic, suggest ideas of how to develop them and their parents are invited to provide resources, such as the child's favourite book, or objects for discussion or the display table. The staff present very interesting and stimulating activities daily and children are eager to share information when talking between themselves or at the snack table. Activities are developed over a period of time, this ensures children's learning is effectively promoted as they are challenged to think by staff to recall relevant words and activities. With high ratios maintained the staff spend considerable amounts of time with the children, directly developing learning to ensure children flourish and become independent in the setting.

Children are well behaved and motivated to try new experiences. They eagerly ask questions about how things work and listen to the responses from staff. They are animated when suggesting their own ideas, such as 'let us pretend to be at the hairdressers', which is actually the role play area set up as a 'baby clinic'. Children organise each other to play together with the role play resources and use the stethoscope and blood pressure toys with considerable knowledge. They demonstrate good negotiating skills as they take turns with the computer by using the 'bell timer' or wait for a turn on a hopper ball outdoors. They share information about their life outside and have confident personalities, which is demonstrated as they include adults in their play and conversations. Children talk about their family and relate the smell of herbs, grown in the pre-school garden, to that of toothpaste used at home.

Some children can write their own names confidently with recognisable letters. Their name cards are immediately available for them to copy off at the craft and mark-making table and children also use their finger to draw around the shapes of the letters in their name on the cards used at the snack table. Most children are aware of the initial letter of their name and use letter sounds spontaneously or in response to staff questions. Children have access to an extensive range of books and the introduction of small groups has led to greater enjoyment and opportunities to repeat text, such as 'zigzag, zigzag' and they laugh at the rhythm of the words, as they eagerly recall the events in the 'Copy Cat Fish' story. The highly committed staff group ensure children's communication, language and literacy development is given top priority.

Children are developing good recall as they listen attentively to instructions and respond confidently to staff as they discuss numbers. Children have an extensive understanding of mathematics and spontaneously use their knowledge effectively when recognising numerals or count during register time or after threading shapes on laces. They are very aware of shapes and eagerly inform adults they have cut a heart shape from the dough, and "there are three different sizes"! Children develop problem solving skills, for example linked to computer programme tasks or when baking. They instigate their own surveys and ask those present what their favourite colour is before adding up the totals.

Children's access to a range of technology and battery operated resources is substantial. There are two computers in regular use, with a wide ranging selection of programmes, and the children

have developed excellent skills both with mouse and comprehension to listen and follow instructions to successfully complete the tasks. They use the CD player confidently, knowing the green dot indicates on and red off. Children's awareness of the natural world is vast as they grow and eat their own vegetables and herbs. Topics which introduce them to the needs of others and diversities in society are included and children have daily access to resources which promote positive images of diversity. Consequently, children are learning through carefully planned activities about the world around them.

Children's physical development of fine manipulative skills is promoted effectively through the use of an extensive range of resources. They use scissors competently to cut out their own pictures for displays and build with construction toys which are easy to connect but hard to take apart, and seek help from adults. Outdoors large muscle skills are successfully developed, for example when they pedal wheeled toys with confidence and stop skilfully. Children's awareness of how their body changes during exercise is an aspect of learning included in topics and referred to by staff on an ongoing basis after energetic games or when it is cold and frosty outdoors. As a result children's learning in this area is well balanced.

Children are motivated to develop their creative experiences as they have access to a considerable range of craft, role play and musical activities. The smiles and laughter which reverberate around the playrooms indicates how much they are enjoying themselves. Children are eager to discuss their work of free choice crafts, paintings or drawings. They dance spontaneously to the 'tidy up time' music and sway to the rhythm they create themselves with the inspiring range of musical instruments presented in the music corner. They dress up in the nurses and doctors tabards and enthusiastically take on the roles, telling other children to be the patients and they must lie down. The children thoroughly enjoy the creative aspects of their learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are treated fairly as the setting has an open-minded approach to inclusion and meeting individual needs effectively. Staff encourage all children to access age-appropriate activities and develop life skills exceptionally well. Individual needs are discussed with parents and comprehensive record sheets for each child contain most detail which enables appropriate care to be given. The ethnic origin of the children is not requested, to assist in ensuring needs are consistently met. Children play with a range of non-stereotypical resources and any negative issues are addressed successfully. The children have access to a versatile range of toys and resources showing positive images of diversity, culture, gender and disability. Understanding and acceptance of the wider community and the development of positive attitudes is effectively increased.

The pre-school has experience of caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and has a substantial understanding of potential need. Staff are aware to adapt activities to ensure inclusion and have a positive attitude to caring for all children. In response to the questions of the other children in the group staff give precise answers which ensure all understand the individual needs of specific children. To ensure all children are included in activities presentation is adapted and resources specifically obtained if necessary to assist individual children. Most staff have attended a basic course in the use of sign language and all children take immense pleasure in learning signs used every day during singing and other activities. Children's needs are successfully met through discussion with parents and the setting has a cohesive understanding of the need to work with parents and outside agencies to effectively meet needs.

There are very effective procedures in place to manage a wide range of children's behaviour. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children behave appropriately as they respond to boundaries set. They are aware of why they must share and take turns or help younger children to use resources. Consistent management helps children feel secure knowing what they can and cannot do and ensures they have a thorough understanding of why they must behave to keep themselves safe. Proactive use of praise and encouragement helps to build development of children's self-esteem.

Positive relationships with parents and a desire to work in partnership with them to meet children's individual needs ensures the staff are able to meet emotional and physical needs effectively. Children are very settled and happy. Parents are updated on their children's well-being and development through discussion regarding snacks, toileting, play activities and are shown photographs. The setting ensures parents are fully aware of policies and procedures and how children will be cared for during discussion at initial visits. Some written information is given to parents to retain, however this does not include detail relating to the 'Birth to three matters' framework. The operational plan made available to parents contains some inconsistent information about the complaints and child protection processes. The certificate of registration and poster giving information where to contact the regulator are displayed to meet requirements.

Partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early education is outstanding. Extensive information is provided regarding the early learning goals and plans. Parents respond to requests to bring in resources linked to themes and topics and can discuss each day the progress children have made. The sharing of development documents is exceptionally well organised, with a target for next term included after discussion. Open evenings take place to provide parents with substantial information and to exchange progress made at home. To improve parents understanding of the early learning goals separate evenings have been arranged. This includes an introduction into the mathematics component with extensive examples of how children will learn and engage in the worthwhile activities for each aspect of learning and how parents can help at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The children's needs are generally met by the pre-school staff who produce a range of records, policies and procedures which are required for the effective and safe management of the provision. However, some records are not fully maintained to promote the welfare of the children at all times. Written policies, some of which require current information to be shared with parents, assist in promoting the care and learning of the children. The registration system which monitors all persons on site and assists in safeguarding the children is comprehensively detailed.

Children are in the care of qualified or experienced staff who are fully supportive to ensure they are happy and settled in the pre-school. A vibrant atmosphere is evident throughout the premises. Care and well-being are always a priority and children are fully supported in reaching their full potential. The ratios are maintained to a commendably high level and children benefit from the key-worker system and shared care as they are self-motivated to move between the different rooms and make decisions, such as whether to go out to play or not. Commendable organisation of playroom layouts and suitably planned, significantly developmentally appropriate activities ensure children's time in the pre-school is worthwhile and provide high levels of challenge for all children. Consequently children are confident in the setting and are eager to engage in the range of exciting and stimulating activities. Staff have focused on this aspect of the service, which has left little time to develop the documentation for parents. The committee

currently leave the day to day management to the highly motivated staff and only take on the role of fundraisers.

The leadership and management for early education is outstanding. A clear vision has been developed of how the setting operates to meet the needs of the children effectively. Staff always strive for further improvement through self evaluation and reflective practice, through regular meetings, planning, evaluations and discussions about children's profile records. This ensures that the curriculum and teaching methods take full account of the children's individual needs and the diverse ways in which children learn. Qualification requirements are met. The high-quality training programme is carefully planned to meet the individual and collective needs of staff. This ensures that staff are able to deliver a highly successfully early education programme for all children. This ensures the children are consistently being stimulated to learn and enjoy themselves. Regular support for the staff team during site visits from staff from the local authority assists in the promotion of children's learning and well-being. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous care inspection the pre-school agreed to: ensure fresh drinking water is available to children at all times; ensure there are clear procedures to be followed in the event of a child being lost, and organise the grouping of children at story time to benefit all children. All three recommendations have been given top priority and addressed to ensure children's welfare needs are consistently met and their enjoyment of stories is successfully enhanced.

In early education the setting agreed to three actions, one of which also related to the organisation of group story time. As there are now three separate groups the older children have their story in the kitchen. During stories, such as 'The Copy Cat Fish', lots of opportunities are given by staff for children to interact and recall the events and give suggestions as to how the story unfolds. They are fully immersed in the story time sessions and without the distractions of the younger children learn more from the activity.

The alphabet line was to be lowered to the children's eye level so that they can see the shape and sequence of the letters more clearly. More than one line is now displayed around the premises, which give the children opportunities to use them in both playrooms. One set of letters includes children's work as staff expertly integrate crafts with more formal learning and motivate the children to cross reference the letters as they engage in activities at the mark-making and craft tables.

With expert planning and exceedingly proficient staff they now provide more opportunities in mathematical development for children to learn about calculation. Spontaneous questions and discussion, as well as labelling in such areas as near the water-play tray, lead children to think about how many more are allowed to play safely in the area or how many staff, plus visitors are present, when calculations are made during register time. As the three actions have been extensively addressed parents can be assured the education of children in the pre-school is of an exceptionally high quality.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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 outstanding.

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 children do not have access to potential hazards in the outdoor play area
- ensure all accident and significant injuries children arrive with are fully recorded and signed by parents, and sterile, suitable dressings are consistently used to safeguard children and promote their good health
- ensure children's records contain detail which enables appropriate care to be given and information shared with parents includes references to current registration requirements and children's learning programmes.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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