

Riverside Early Years

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY252732
Inspection date	08 October 2007
Inspector	Anne Barnsley
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Registered person	Pauline Anne Almond
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Riverside Early Years was registered in 2003 to provide full day care. It is situated in the centre of Boston. It is open each week day between 08:30 and 17:00 for 48 weeks a year. The provision serves families in the local area.

The setting offers care for children from two to five years during term time. After school and holiday care is offered according to demand. Currently 48 children attend the group for a variety of sessions: of these 18 children receive funding for nursery education. Several children speak English as an additional language and the group supports some children with learning difficulties.

The group operates from the Sea Scout hut and is the sole user of the premises whilst open. The premises consist of a main hall, changing room, toilets, and a small room with adjacent kitchen on a raised level. There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area to the rear of the building.

A total of 10 staff work with the children. One member of staff has a Level 3 qualification in Early Years Care and Education and eight have a Level 2. Three of these members of staff are currently working towards a Level 3 qualification. The group receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's good health is effectively promoted because accident and medication records are maintained appropriately, having been updated so that they are clear and easy to follow. The staff implement a cleaning routine to ensure that the kitchen is clean, tables are wiped before being used for food and that floors are swept between activities to reduce the build up of dust particles from the wooden floor. Children bring packed lunches from home but there is currently no policy in place that demonstrates to parents how food is stored safely to keep it fresh. Children are supported and encouraged to learn about simple hygiene practices as they wash their hands at appropriate times. Staff follow effective nappy changing procedures to protect children's health and avoid cross-infection.

Healthy eating is promoted and children enjoy nourishing snacks, such as a variety of fresh fruit, toast and jam and a choice of low sugar squash, milk or water. On occasions children may have warm squash, tea or milk shake. Children always have access to drinking water from a water dispenser in the play room.

Children have daily outside play and have plenty of fresh air and exercise in the nursery garden. They learn to understand when to wear coats to keep themselves warm. The nursery owns a varied range of suitable equipment, such as slides, bats and balls and a range of wheeled toys, which help children exercise their large muscles and refine skills such as balancing, throwing and catching. Children run about freely outdoors and skilfully negotiate their own space. They develop their fine motor skills when participating in craft activities, constructing small pieces and using scissors and pencils with increasing skill.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a secure environment that is decorated with posters, examples of children's work and is welcoming to all. The main door is kept locked with a key pad fitted, and there are strict procedures for allowing access to visitors. Children and parents are warmly greeted by staff each day. Satisfactory standards of safety are maintained to protect children, and risk assessments have been carried out to identify any potential hazards. There is a daily check list that staff use to check the safety of both the inside and the outside, for example, the outside area is checked before children go outside to play and any rubbish or debris is removed. The storage of toys outside does not promote children's safety as these are piled on each other to a height that could cause an injury if a child knocked into them. The area where these toys are stored is accessible to children and does not have an effective barrier to ensure that the risk of injury to children is minimised.

Children access an interesting range of suitable resources to meet all their developmental needs. Inside these are stored safely in accessible units that enable children to self-select and develop their independence. Staff keep children safe by ensuring all equipment is cleaned and maintained in good order. Children learn to keep themselves safe, for example, they are gently reminded by staff not to run around indoors and they are given explanations as to why this might be dangerous to others. They eagerly help tidy away their toys at the end of a session and are learning to care for these appropriately so that they remain in good condition and stay safe.

Children are safeguarded because the staff understand their duty of care towards all children and have knowledge of local child protection procedures. Some staff have completed child protection training and some are booked to do training. All staff receive in-house induction to ensure that they are conversant with the nursery's child protection policy and procedure.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan for younger children which enables them to provide a varied range of activities and monitor children's progress. They interact warmly with children, speaking kindly and calmly to them, which ensures that children feel confident and self-assured.

Children are involved and generally interested in everything they do, although they do not always listen well in large groups. Children are very vocal and lively at group discussion time and want to contribute. They are mostly the youngest age range at this time of year and have yet to learn to take turns and to listen to one speaker. Children access plenty of creative activities every session and particularly enjoy learning through their senses whilst exploring vegetables through taste and smell and investigating the feel of natural items such as leaves, corn on the cob and twigs. Some children are confident talkers and clearly feel very comfortable approaching staff and asking for particular toys or for some support. Older children use their initiative freely and participate in a good balance of adult-directed activities and choices from all that is available. For example, they use the role play area well and make choices about who they wish to play with. Children are making friendships and refer to each other by name.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. All staff are responsible for covering one area of learning each week so that each day all areas of the curriculum are covered. Staff show a secure understanding of the stepping stones although observations and evaluations are not used effectively to inform planning and show the differentiation made for children of different abilities. All children are supported during activities and excellent support is given to children with learning difficulties. Children who are rapid learners are supported less well and are not challenged appropriately or stretched to meet their full potential. Information gained during observations of children is used to complete developmental profiles but this information is also not used effectively to demonstrate differentiation in group activities and to show how staff promote the individual needs of children when doing an activity with children of mixed abilities. Children become involved and enthusiastic when it is time to play outside as they clearly enjoy this. Planning for outside learning does not demonstrate how all areas of physical development are being covered as it is not mentioned in the planning. Children confidently initiate interactions with others, for example, they choose who they wish to sit next to and who they wish to play with. Children are making friendships and learning to be part of a co-operative group. Children generally behave well and are helpful, kind and are learning to share and to take turns with their toys.

Children freely and confidently initiate conversations in all areas of their play and chat happily to staff and to each other. They build towers together and see how high they can make them, and they play together in a make-believe world with dinosaurs in the green sand. Children are beginning to develop an understanding of letter sounds, writing and recognising their own name. They access a limited range of mark-making resources that enables them to spontaneously practise their emergent writing through play, for example in the role play area. They demonstrate

an enjoyment of stories and singing which helps to develop their vocabulary. They use numbers confidently and show developing skills in counting in their everyday activities. Children can identify and name different colours and they can match and sort shapes and pairs. They demonstrate a good awareness and understanding of change as they discuss autumn and the changing leaves and environment around them. They carefully examine a selection of vegetables, and explore the skins and taste and smell the flesh of some. Children create autumn pictures with an interesting selection of natural items, although many learning opportunities are lost during this activity as children are insufficiently challenged and conversed with. They paint, draw and use a range of media to create art work, both self initiated and through planned activities. Despite this, children are happy and confident in this setting and are making steady progress towards the early learning goals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by staff who gather appropriate information from parents, which enables them to meet children's individual needs. Children with learning difficulties and children who speak English as a second language are extremely well supported by a trained member of staff. The nursery prospectus has been translated into other languages where appropriate and the setting has access to a translator should this be required. Relationships with parents are warm and friendly and information is shared effectively through verbal exchanges as well as through diaries, newsletters and notices.

All children learn responsible behaviour and are generally well behaved. They are polite and are well supported by staff who are positive role models. Staff provide children with clear explanations about unwanted behaviour in ways that they can understand. They learn to share, take turns and be kind and considerate, which helps them become aware of their own needs and the needs of others. Children become appropriately aware of our wider society as they take part in a range of activities linked to cultural festivals such as Chinese New Year. Staff demonstrate understanding of the issues involved and have a variety of images of diversity around the setting, and toys and books that promote positive learning to children. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents in regard to nursery education is satisfactory. Parents receive information about the Foundation stage through the notice board and the nursery prospectus. They are actively encouraged to contribute to their child's learning through the home-link books and book bags. Parents talk informally to staff about their child's progress and achievements and can arrange a convenient time with staff if greater discussion is needed. Parents receive an annual report about their child's progress towards the early learning goals.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Recruitment and vetting procedures ensure children are well protected and cared for by staff with a secure knowledge and understanding of child development. Staff have regard for the safety and well-being of all children, however supervision is not always stringent particularly when children go from the playroom to the toilets on occasions alone. Ratios of adults to children are maintained successfully with effective arrangements in place to provide staff cover for breaks. Documentation is maintained satisfactorily but the storage and accessibility of much of the documentation is disorganised and does not effectively promote the smooth running of

the setting. All mandatory policies are in place, although there is currently no sickness policy. Policies and procedures are shared successfully with staff in their personal staff handbook and included as part of the induction process.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory and staff work well as a team to progress children towards the early learning goals. For example, all staff demonstrate a commitment and enthusiasm to attend training, and all have completed a range of courses that extend their skills. Supervision and appraisals effectively highlight areas for individual development, and the manager monitors the educational curriculum and reviews practice with staff through ongoing observations of teaching. Regular staff meetings enable staff to share ideas, plan together and be aware of relevant information.

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 manager agreed to increase her management skills. Since the last inspection the manager has completed a management course, which has enabled her to develop her skills to a satisfactory level. She was asked to review her operational plan to ensure it is effective with regards to the organisation of the sessions and the recruitment and appointment of staff including their induction and deployment. She has worked closely with Sure Start to develop her policies and procedures especially with regards to the organisation of the sessions and the recruitment and appointment of staff including their induction and deployment. This has been achieved as more qualified staff have been employed to ensure that staff are deployed effectively, and the procedure for interviewing and appointing staff has been reviewed. Interviews have been redesigned to follow a set format and procedure and all new staff now have a full induction day followed by a three month probation period. Staff are now deployed more effectively according to their skills and qualifications, for example, unqualified staff prepare the children's snack breaks while qualified staff work directly with the children.

The provider agreed to ensure that the premises are clean, maintained in a suitable state of repair and rooms are maintained to an adequate temperature. The provider has made improvements to the setting as she has boarded the playroom with plaster board to insulate it and now uses blow heaters in addition to the electric wall heaters that were already installed. She has had new windows fitted to the premises, also for additional insulation. As this is a shared premises which does not belong to the provider this demonstrates a commitment to making improvements for children. The provider was asked to ensure that the health and safety policy meets requirements especially as regards risk assessments. The health and safety policy has been updated and risk assessments have been made of the premises, both inside and outside. Check lists are in place to ensure that risks are identified and the appropriate action can be taken to keep children safe.

The provider agreed to improve hygiene routines to promote the good health of children and prevent the spread of infection, to improve records for administering medication and to obtain parental permission to seek emergency medical treatment. This has been achieved by providing children with opportunities to learn to do this independently for themselves through the purchase of a portable sink unit that children use to wash their hands before snack time. Additional information has been included on children's medication forms and these are now a comprehensive record with the appropriate requests and signatures. The owner has also obtained parental permission to seek emergency medical treatment in the event that this should be necessary for the welfare of children.

At the previous inspection children were not provided with a choice of drinks and were given milk shakes with a high sugar content which did not promote healthy options. The provider was asked to ensure that drinks were nutritious. Promoting healthy options has been addressed as children now have choice of low sugar squash, milk, milk shake on occasions and warm tea or warm squash during the winter. Staff's ability to safeguard children was limited and they have now developed their understanding through increasing their knowledge of child protection procedures. This has been achieved through a more detailed induction programme and in-house training at staff meetings. The deputy is booked to attend a child protection course next month and her knowledge will be cascaded to the staff to increase their knowledge further.

The provider agreed to develop the records, policies and procedures required for the effective and safe running of the setting. There has been some progress made to ensuring that the records, policies and procedures required for the effective and safe running of the setting are in place as these have been reviewed. However, further developments are still needed to some policies such as the sickness policy, and all policies, procedures and nursery administration remain muddled and difficult to find on request.

Nursery Education.

At the last inspection the provider agreed to develop and implement systems to identify the group's strengths and to provide ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the provision for nursery education. She agreed to ensure that planning is informed by assessment so that individual children's next steps are clearly indicated and to increase staff's knowledge of the Foundation Stage to ensure that all aspects of each area of learning are delivered consistently.

The provider has made the following improvements to the equality of the nursery education that children are provided with in this setting. She has developed and implemented systems to identify the group's strengths and to provide ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the provision for nursery education. She has achieved this through the introduction of new observation records and 'I can do' books which all staff complete as an ongoing task. Staff have recently started to investigate the new Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) observation books and learn how to use these. Children's observations are kept up to date and also contain photographs of them doing activities that relate to the observations made.

Planning, evaluations and assessments are overseen by the manager/owner to ensure these are covering all areas of learning. Each member of staff has a designated area of learning each week to focus on, plan and deliver. New observation records are completed by staff for each child and this information, in conjunction with activity evaluations, is used to inform future planning. These improvements have been made, however, further developments are still needed with the planning and use of this information as children are not always grouped appropriately to ensure that they receive sufficient challenge to reach their full potential in learning.

Staff's knowledge of the Foundation Stage has been increased through the completion of several courses that developed their understanding of how to plan the curriculum, curriculum guidance and provide activities that promote children's physical development. Planning for physical development outside is not promoted sufficiently well. An ongoing training programme is in place and future courses that have confirmed bookings include Outdoor Provision, Language Learning, Communication Matters and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) training.

The developments that have been made since the last inspection satisfactorily improve the quality of the care, learning and welfare of the children in this setting.

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 procedure may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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 parents who provide packed lunches are informed of what can be stored safely
- ensure that children can play safely outside through a combination of supervision and protection from hazards
- ensure that records, policies and procedures which are required for the effective and safe management of the provision, and to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained and are always available for inspection by the early years child care inspector
- ensure that staff are deployed effectively within the premises to ensure the safety, welfare and development of 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 that equal emphasis is placed on the planning of outside activities as there is when planning inside activities and that the outside activities are purposeful and enable children to develop a wide range of physical skills
- improve the opportunities for children to initiate spontaneous mark-making and develop their emergent writing
- develop evaluations and planning further to demonstrate differentiation, and how children are grouped to ensure that all children are provided with sufficient challenge to meet their individual needs and reach their full potential.

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