

Gamlingay Rainbow Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	221794
Inspection date	19 October 2007
Inspector	Kelly Eyre
Setting Address	The Old Chapel, Green End, Gamlingay, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 3JZ
Telephone number	01767 652157
E-mail	
Registered person	Gamlingay Rainbow 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Gamlingay Rainbow Pre-School is run by a voluntary management committee which is a registered charity. It opened in 1984 and operates from one main room in a church building. It is situated in a residential area of Gamlingay, Bedfordshire. A maximum of 25 children may attend the setting at any one time. It is open each weekday during term-time and sessions are from 09:10 to 12:00, with an optional lunch club operating until 13:00 on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 26 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 15 children receive funding for early education. Children come from local and neighbouring communities. The setting is able to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs six members of staff. Of these, two hold appropriate early years qualifications and three are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is consistently promoted because there are good daily hygiene procedures in place which minimise the spread of infection, for example, all areas are checked before children arrive and children wash their hands before snack time. Children's independence is promoted and they are encouraged to take responsibility for personal hygiene tasks, for example, they help themselves to tissues and remember to throw these away after using them. However, their understanding of the relevance of these practices is not fully promoted as staff do not consistently discuss these with them. Children's health in an emergency situation is well promoted because the majority of staff members hold appropriate first aid qualifications. The spread of infection is further minimised because there is clear guidance regarding action to be taken should a child become ill whilst at the setting and also covering the exclusion of children who are unwell.

Children's health is further promoted as they are offered a range of healthy snacks and are able to help themselves to drinks throughout the session. Snack times provide additional learning opportunities, where children are able to learn valuable social skills. They choose when to have their snack, sit in small groups, help to serve their snacks and clear away after themselves. Allergies and special diets are clearly recorded and staff ensure that children are only offered the correct food and drinks.

Children's physical development is well promoted and they are offered a wide range of physical activities. They develop control of their bodies and improve physical skills such as co-ordination and balance as they use ride-on toys, climb and slide. They also enjoy structured sessions, for example, whilst playing with the parachute, they move up and down, stretch, move in time to their singing, push and pull, and rock from side to side. Children have good opportunities to develop finer skills and physical movements through their involvement in a wide range of activities. For example, they hold pencils and scissors correctly and improve their hand-eye co-ordination as they manipulate small construction pieces.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The thoughtful attention paid by staff to the setting up of the indoor and outdoor play areas means that children are cared for in a stimulating and welcoming environment where there are colourful posters and displays of their work. Their daily safety is consistently promoted because staff have a good understanding of this area. Children are able to move around safely, freely and independently because daily safety checks are completed before they arrive. The consistent implementation of comprehensive policies and procedures ensures that all staff are aware of safety practices and are able to promote children's safety at all times. For example, there are rigorous and practical procedures covering fire safety, security of the building and the regular testing of electrical equipment.

Children are gaining a clear, realistic understanding about keeping themselves and others safe. They are given explanations by staff to help them appreciate the relevance of this. They also participate in topic work, covering concepts such as 'Safety Circles', helping them to understand the relevance of issues such as stranger danger. Children use toys and play resources that are appropriate for their size and developmental stages. Many of these are stored in accessible

containers so that children are able to make choices about their play. Children's welfare is well promoted because staff keep up to date with relevant training and have a good knowledge of current procedures. All relevant records and contact details are in place, ensuring that staff are able to act promptly to identify and report any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children come in happily at the start of the sessions and are secure and confident, separating well from their parents and carers and keenly exploring the activities and play resources. They have good relationships with staff and with each other. Their play and learning are extended and their daily experiences of the setting are enhanced because staff genuinely enjoy the children's company and are skilled in supporting children in their chosen activities, using gentle questions and discussions to aid this. For example, a member of staff talks with a child dressed in an astronaut's costume, discussing rockets and the conditions in space. This area is further supported as there is information displayed around the setting regarding different types of play and how to promote and extend these.

Children's independence is promoted as they choose their activities and organise their play throughout the sessions. They are confident and have a high self-esteem because staff support them well and consistently offer appropriate praise. For example, a child is given lots of praise for making a print-out of a model and proudly shows other staff and children the final picture. Children's transition from the setting to lower school is aided by the good liaison between the two settings. Staff arrange visits to the school and talk with the children about expectations of school.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have attended additional training and have a thorough knowledge of the Foundation Stage, using this to underpin and inform their daily work. This enables them to plan and adapt activities and ensure that children are consistently offered an appropriate range which promotes their development in all areas of learning. The planning of activities is clear and practical and is carried out on a weekly basis, allowing staff the opportunity to include additional activities and adapt the planning to suit the current needs of individual children.

Children's progress is balanced because staff use clear methods to assess them and also know the children well. Keyworkers keep records of children's progress, using the information from these, and their knowledge of the children to help determine future work and activity planning. However, assessment records do not have an initial assessment of children's starting points and some files are not updated regularly. This could lead to a delay in tracking individual development or in highlighting potential areas requiring additional support or specific activities.

Children demonstrate their enjoyment as they participate in the wide range of activities and play opportunities. They are offered familiar activities and play resources that help build their confidence within the setting. These include daily opportunities such as reading, role play, construction activities and sand play. Children's knowledge is extended and they are offered further challenges as they participate in a variety of themed work which is changed weekly. This enables them to look more closely at subjects such as 'All About Me', 'Family and Friends', 'Countries' and 'Spring'. Activity-planning is supported by a clear, well-balanced session plan

which ensures that children are offered variety throughout the session. Staff use their skill to adjust this plan to suit the current individual needs of the children.

The environment within the setting promotes the development of the attitudes and dispositions that enable children to achieve in their learning. For example, clear explanations and a consistent approach from staff enable children to gain a good understanding of right and wrong. They are motivated to learn through exciting and interesting activities which are changed frequently to maintain interest. For example, children are growing a variety of flowers and vegetables in the garden and enjoy tending these, learning about the conditions needed in order for them to thrive. Children are gaining a good understanding of the concept that writing can be used for a range of communication purposes. For example, a small group of children enjoy writing on the white board whilst another group dressed as police officers are encouraged to use pencils and notepads as part of their role play. Children interact well with others and confidently use language to communicate their thoughts, feelings and ideas. They are exceptionally confident when talking in groups, continuously discussing what they are doing and contributing their ideas.

Children are beginning to see connections and relationships in numbers and to use numbers in a meaningful context. For example, a small group of children count the number of children present in their group, count how many pens they have and work out how many more are needed in order for each child to have a pen. Children confidently use mathematical and positional language, for example, when playing parachute games, children understand the concepts of under, over, high and low. They have daily opportunities to observe, explore and question through their involvement in a wide range of activities that form the foundation of their learning in subjects such as history, geography, science and technology. An example of this is the opportunities they are offered to explore using information and communication technology equipment. They confidently use computers digital cameras, printers and photocopiers.

Children enjoy a wide range of physical activities that help them to develop their confidence and skills, for example, they push and pull toys, use ride-on toys, pedal tricycles, and climb, slide and balance on outdoor equipment. They are gaining a good understanding of the human body through topic work and discussions with staff. For example, a small group of children discuss the role of the skeleton, muscles and heart. Children enjoy a wide range of opportunities to explore colour, texture, shape and form through activities such as junk modelling, play dough, sand and water play and making collages. The development of their imagination is encouraged through a variety of role play opportunities. For example, a member of staff talks with children about the police officer costumes they are wearing, encouraging them to develop their play and to consider safety issues within this.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel welcome and valued because they are respected as individuals. Their confidence and self-esteem are promoted because staff praise their efforts and achievements and consistently offer appropriate support and encouragement, creating a positive environment. Children who have learning difficulties or disabilities have their individual requirements recognised and consistently met. There is a comprehensive policy underpinning this and staff ensure that this is consistently implemented. Children's progress is reviewed on a regular basis, ensuring the balanced promotion of their development. Staff work sensitively with parents and liaise with other professionals to ensure that children's care is consistent and appropriate. The

good levels of support and high staff ratios ensure that children are able to participate meaningfully in the activities and daily routines of the setting.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They are offered a range of activities which help increase their understanding of their local community and the diversities of wider society. They have access to an appropriate range of play resources which give positive images and information about other ways of life. These include books, dressing-up clothes, posters and dolls. Their awareness is further promoted as they participate in activities to celebrate festivals such as Chinese New Year, Christmas Around the World and Diwali. Children's behaviour is good and they confidently negotiate turn-taking and sharing. They show care and concern for each other, for example, a child pours a drink for a younger child. They are gaining a good understanding about taking responsibility for their own actions because staff give them clear explanations, helping them to understand the implications of their behaviour and make informed decisions about this.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are given practical information about the setting's procedures and policies, ensuring that they are aware of all daily practice and expectations. The good use of newsletters, interim letters and notice boards ensures that they are kept up to date with information about activity plans, themes and topics. Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress and activities through daily discussions with staff, meetings with keyworkers and access to their child's assessment files. Good use is made of social and fundraising events to provide further information to parents and ensure all feel involved. Children benefit from the setting's positive attitude to obtaining feedback and making improvements. For example, questionnaires are used to gain parents' views, and staff collate this information and implement suggestions and ideas for improvements.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall, children's needs are met. The good organisation of all areas of the setting helps to ensure their daily experiences are positive and they are consistently offered a balanced range of activities and play opportunities. For example, both the indoor and outdoor play areas are well organised, with designated areas for different types of play. This ensures that children are able to concentrate on their chosen activities and can move safely and freely between these. The good organisation of paperwork and records means that these are accessible, can be easily updated and staff are able to check that children's needs are met. All records are stored confidentially and this is further supported by a 'Confidentiality Policy' which helps to ensure that children are protected and parents are aware of the records kept and their right to access these.

Children's daily safety and welfare are promoted because there are stringent procedures in place for checking that all staff are suitable to work with children. A clear staff induction process and daily monitoring of the setting help to ensure that policies and procedures are understood by all and are consistently implemented. This is further supported by additional guidance regarding the deployment of students, ensuring that they are aware of their roles and responsibilities and are able to provide consistent and appropriate care for all children.

Leadership and management is good. Children's overall learning, development and welfare are promoted because the manager has a good understanding of her roles and responsibilities. The setting is well-managed and is continuously monitored, ensuring that appropriate care is provided and staff are supported in their daily work. Children benefit from staff's positive

attitude to attending training and to reviewing and improving their practice. The manager works in partnership with staff to review work and make changes which improve children's daily opportunities. An example of this is a recent review of activity-planning methods, which ensures that children are offered a balanced range of opportunities that meet their individual needs. The manager acts as a good role model to staff and children, attending additional training whenever possible and demonstrating her genuine enjoyment and enthusiasm for her work. This creates a positive atmosphere within the setting, in which children can play happily, learn and develop.

Improvements since the last inspection

At their last inspection, the setting was asked to improve behaviour management strategies. Staff have attended additional training and are clearly aware of the setting's policy which is implemented daily, ensuring that children's behaviour is handled appropriately and consistently. They were asked to improve records of visitors and these now include all relevant details, further promoting children's safety and welfare. The setting was also asked to develop children's independence. Children are encouraged to select resources throughout the session and are well supported by staff in this. They also help to tidy away the play resources, further promoting their independence.

The setting was asked to improve the promotion of equal opportunities. A member of staff has been allocated to co-ordinate this, additional resources have been purchased, parents have been invited to share their knowledge and additional activities have been introduced, further promoting children's understanding of this area and ensuring that the needs of all children are met. They were also asked to provide an area for children wishing to rest. A carpeted area and a book corner have now been created, promoting children's daily comfort and ensuring that their needs are met.

At their last inspection of funded early education, the setting was asked to improve the planning and assessment methods. These have been reviewed and all areas of learning are now reflected in both. Plans are clearly linked to the stepping stones and weekly planning means that staff can adjust the activities to allow for individual children's needs. Assessment is used to inform weekly planning. These measures ensure that children's individual development is promoted in all areas. The setting was also asked to make improvements in some of the areas of learning. A book area has now been created and children enjoy accessing this. They are also offered a wide range of activities and opportunities related to construction and role play, further promoting their development in these areas.

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.

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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):

- provide further opportunities for children to gain an understanding of the relevance of hygiene practices.

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 promote children's individual development by ensuring that their assessment files show a starting point and that these files are updated regularly so that development can be tracked and any issues highlighted at an early stage.

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