

Rocking Horse Nursery Stamford Limited

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY276326
Inspection date	23 October 2007
Inspector	Jean Suff
Setting Address	85 Rutland Road, Stamford, Lincolnshire, PE9 1UP
Telephone number	01780 757922
E-mail	
Registered person	The Rocking Horse Nursery Stamford Limited
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Rocking Horse Nursery has been registered since 1992. The nursery is registered for 48 children and currently has 72 children on roll. Of these, 23 children are in receipt of nursery education funding. The nursery opens each weekday including school holidays from 08.00 until 18.00. It is situated on the outskirts of Stamford close to main routes. It provides a service for mainly working families who require full day care, and sessional care is also available. There are 11 members of staff of whom seven hold a childcare qualification at level 3, two at level 2 and two are currently undertaking training.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are encouraged to follow appropriate hygiene practices in their daily routines, for example, as staff hand out wipes after eating birthday cake and remind older children to wash their hands after using the toilet. Children show they are aware of dental hygiene, as when

they talk with visitors about when they clean their teeth at home. Staff give prompt attention to babies and younger children in the event of a soiled or wet nappy and follow proper procedures to ensure risks of cross-infection are minimised. They pay careful heed to information from parents regarding children's individual health, care and dietary needs, so ensuring these are met. Staff are quick to notify parents and relevant authorities of any infectious outbreak and ensure a deep clean of equipment and premises occurs immediately to reduce cross-infection. Most required documentation to support children's health and welfare is in place, such as accident and medication records. However, parental permission to seek medical advice or treatment is not always obtained or the wording sufficiently clear to ensure children's welfare in the case of an emergency.

Children enjoy a varied and well-balanced menu of meals and snacks. For example, lunches such as savoury mince with mashed potato and vegetables followed by a cooked pudding and teas such as cold meat platter with brown bread, cucumber and carrot sticks. Children learn about healthy eating as they choose from a range of fruits at snack time. Milk or water is taken together at set times and drinking water is readily accessible to children throughout the day to ensure they remain hydrated and comfortable.

Babies develop growing control of their bodies as staff encourage them to roll and crawl. They are able to use resources such as a static frame or baby walker to develop their standing and walking skills. Children play outside on most days so enabling them to experience outdoor physical activity. Younger children sometimes go for walks in the local neighbourhood, enabling them to benefit from outdoor experiences in the fresh air. Pre-school children enjoy playing games, running and steering wheeled vehicles in the enclosed garden. They also take part in music and movement sessions indoors. However, at present large physical activities are not planned to offer suitable challenge for older and more able children to extend their skills.

Babies enjoy handling a selection of resources such as textured wooden and metal objects and cause and effect toys, so helping them to develop their hand to eye coordination. Toddlers and pre-school children develop their dexterity as they handle bricks, scissors and glue sticks, or as they make marks on paper.

Children across the age range rest and sleep according to their individual needs and parental wishes, using bedding appropriate to their stage of development, ranging from cots to large floor cushions. The welfare of sleeping children is upheld because they are within the main room and supervised at all times. The temperature of the nursery is regularly monitored and adjusted as necessary to ensure an appropriate temperature is maintained.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in secure premises which provide ample space for them to participate safely in a range of activities. Attractive displays help to provide a welcoming environment, and the use of low pegs and individual trays for belongings help children exercise some independence in their daily routines. Most children use the enclosed garden at least once a day to enable them to safely enjoy physical activity in the fresh air.

Low tables and chairs, which are in very good condition, enable toddlers to eat and play safely in comfort and with growing independence. Cots, floor cushions and bedding are in sound and clean condition, enabling children who need to rest or sleep to do so comfortably. Staff in the

baby room are particularly vigilant of play resources and wash them frequently depending on their composition.

Positive steps are taken to promote children's safety within the setting. For example, daily risk assessments ensure they cover changing situations. Staff are careful in observing routine safety precautions to minimise potential hazards to children, for example, they ensure stair gates are kept secure throughout the nursery to prevent children accessing specific areas. Required adult to child ratios enable staff to supervise children at all times to maintain their safety. Detailed policies identify the procedures to be followed in the case of an emergency such as a fire, and staff show a sound understanding of their responsibilities to safeguard children's welfare in the event. Children learn to handle items such as child-sized cutlery safely within daily routines. Staff introduce children to aspects of safety through their play, for example, road safety whilst using wheeled vehicles in the outdoor play space.

Staff in the setting are familiar with the local child protection guidelines for safeguarding children. They are aware of the common signs and symptoms of abuse and of their responsibility to protect children in their care. Staff have attended training to support their knowledge and understanding and the nursery has a clearly written child protection policy. Therefore, children's welfare is safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are settled, happy and relaxed in the nursery. They choose from an appropriate range of resources that are organised in advance. They are confident and approach staff to talk about their immediate needs and experiences. Babies are actively engaged in their play, for example as they handle activity toys and cause and effect toys with interest. Staff working with younger children are closely involved in children's play and show sensitive responses to them. All children enjoy opportunities to socialise as a group at snack and meal times. Staff working with babies and toddlers make use of planning related to the 'Birth to three matters' framework to ensure babies have a balanced range of activities and experiences. Children's individual care needs are recognised as staff caring for babies and younger children take careful account of parental information, for example with regard to children's preferred sleep routines.

Nursery Education

Teaching and learning is satisfactory. The new staff team working with funded children are suitably qualified and have a good understanding of how children learn through play and practical activities. They have attended training to increase their knowledge of the Foundation Stage and have put much in place to help children learn. Staff manage children well and have sound expectations for behaviour, giving clear boundaries and sensitive, age-appropriate explanations for routines. Staff work directly with children for much of the time and actively encourage children's play and focus on specific activities. They ask children questions to make them think and extend their language well through general conversation. Staff provide a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities and encourage children to try new experiences. The pre-school room is suitably organised but at present limited use is made of the outside area.

Planning for activities covers all six areas of learning and is linked to the stepping stones, leading to the early learning goals. Careful observations and assessments are made of children's stage of development at focussed activities and these are mostly used to plan further activities

that move children to the next stage in their learning. However, many activities offer insufficient challenge to children, such as snack time or carpet sessions, and this affects children's learning. Staff do not as yet make full use of the resources available or use everyday routines to extend children's learning beyond the planned learning intentions. For example, they do not always provide a well-resourced or interesting space for children to engage in role play so that they can develop their imagination or practise new skills. This limits learning.

Once settled, children are confident and keen to participate in activities. They have made firm friendships and enjoy chatting to each other during their play. They enjoy playing games together, singing well known songs and saying good morning to each other at carpet time which makes them feel part of the group. Children are developing their communication, language and literacy skills as they listen to each other's ideas, recognise each other's names and common words around the room and 'have a go' at writing their own name on their work. They enjoy opportunities to listen to stories and share books together. Children explore numbers as they play games in the garden, they use number names and begin to be aware of combining two groups of objects as they count scissors that are out and those that are left. Children are beginning to use mathematical language as they compare their drinks to see who has the most left. They learn about counting on and counting back as they sing number songs.

Children talk about the weather and learn about the changing seasons as they look at trees and discuss when certain fruits are grown. They develop knowledge of texture, colour and shape as they mix paint, crayon and produce collage pictures. Children take part in weekly music sessions where they enjoy playing instruments and exploring sound and rhythm. Children have sufficient opportunities to develop their fine motor skills as they draw, colour, use glue spreaders and paint. They enjoy using construction equipment to build small and large-scale models and use their imagination in small world play as they pretend to be steering spaceships. Children work well together and understand each other's needs, taking turns in playground games and spontaneously sharing resources at the easel. They are beginning to develop their large muscles by using equipment in the outside play area but this is not supported by any planned course that is specifically aimed at enhancing the skills of young children.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff are calm and attentive in their dealings with children, so helping them to feel included and at home. Children are relaxed in their daily dealings with staff and peers, for example babies and toddlers show enjoyment by their gestures and facial expressions as they listen to music and stories. Children are able to exercise choice from a selection of activities. Children behave well in a variety of situations, for example, as toddlers sit together for meal times and older children play 'Mr Wolf' outside. They begin to take account of each others needs and feelings, as when they move to create a space which allows another child to join a group.

Staff take good account of information about children's specific care needs, so helping ensure children's individuality is recognised. Children begin to learn about lifestyles other than their own through a range of play resources that reflect diversity. They taste foods from different cultures, hear stories from various religions and take part in local celebrations, such as when they decorate a float, dress up and ride in the local annual festival. The setting has experience of caring for children with a variety of needs and staff recognise the importance of liaising with parents and relevant professionals with regard to provision for any children with identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Prospective parents receive well-presented information giving details of arrangements for their children's care. General information, such as nursery routines and menus, is clearly displayed at the entrance for parents to see. Parents receive regular newsletters informing them about events and there is both an informal and written system in place for the daily exchange of information to support the children's care. Parents fill in forms on entry ensuring staff have essential information to make children's time safe and enjoyable. Children benefit from the positive relationships that exist between parents and staff, and parents are happy with their children's care.

The partnership with parents and carers of children receiving nursery education is satisfactory. Staff are very welcoming and approachable and answer parents' questions. Parents are able to access children's developmental records if they wish. Systematic arrangements are in place to ensure parents receive information about their children's progress towards the early learning goals. The nursery has yet to establish ways to involve parents meaningfully in their children's learning ensuring everyone works to the best effect for the children's benefit.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall children's needs are met. Children across the age range are relaxed and at ease in the nursery because they have positive and settled relationships with the established staff team. Most staff hold recognised childcare qualifications to level three, so helping to provide a secure basis for children's care. Systematic recruitment procedures are in place to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. Overall good adult to child ratios are maintained. However, the system for registering staff attendance does not clearly show where particular staff are based within the nursery to ensure children are well supervised. Staff have a good awareness of the policies and procedures helping to support their work with children. Most required records are methodically maintained to help underpin provision for children's care and welfare.

Leadership and management of funded nursery education is good. The pre-school room leader has undergone training for the Foundation Stage and is committed to ongoing professional development. She works closely with a team of staff who all contribute to the planning and activities provided for children. Formal and informal staff appraisals are conducted, management are aware of their own strengths and weaknesses and identify their training needs appropriately. The setting has taken advantage of local authority support over recent months to set up the nursery education provision and now has good internal systems in place to evaluate provision, identify priorities and carry out their development plan.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the nursery was given three recommendations. They were required to ensure that nappy changing facilities are suitable and promote positive care practice. They were also required to ensure that sufficient cots are available in the baby room to enable greater choice of sleeping arrangements. Thirdly, they were required to ensure that policies and procedures identify the methods used to promote positive behaviour and the procedure that staff should follow if an allegation is made against them. These recommendations have been met therefore children's welfare is enhanced.

At the last nursery education inspection the setting was required to extend the range of resources that promote positive images of ethnicity, religious and cultural differences, disability and gender. Although resources are not extensive, the nursery has purchased books, play

materials, dressing-up clothes and figures for small world play which help children to learn about the wider world, therefore this recommendation has been met.

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 by Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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 written parental permission is requested to the seeking of any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment in the future
- ensure the system for registering children and staff attendance clearly shows on a daily basis the accurate hours of attendance of staff included in the adult to child ratios.

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):

- develop established routines and the provision of activities to ensure there is sufficient challenge for all children to extend their learning at all times
- develop ways to encourage parents to continue some play and learning activities at home.

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