

Rainbow Pre School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY254847
Inspection date	23 November 2007
Inspector	Paula Jane Hayhow
Setting Address	Priory Methodist Church, 63 Newnham Avenue, Bedford, Bedfordshire, MK41 9QJ
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Registered person	The Trustees of Rainbow Pre School Playgroup
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?

Rainbow Pre-School Playgroup opened at its present location in 2003. It is managed by a voluntary parents' committee. The pre-school playgroup operates from a large hall within the Priory Methodist Church, in Bedford, Bedfordshire.

A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school playgroup at any one time. The pre-school playgroup is open each weekday from 09:30 until 12:00 term time only. The group operates a lunch club every day from 12:00 to 13:00 term time only. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 43 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these 21 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The group has systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school playgroup employs five staff. Three of the staff, including the pre-school leader hold appropriate early years qualifications. Two staff members are working towards a recognised childcare qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children participate in a variety of physical activities which contribute to their good health. Good use is made of the outdoor play area, where children enjoy using the climbing frame, slide, tunnel, ribbon streamers and smaller equipment such as hoops and balls. The children learn to throw and catch the balls with some precision and enjoy practising and improving their physical skills and co-ordination as they participate in activities such as sports day races, music and movement sessions, pedalling bicycles, pushing buggies and action rhymes such as 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star'. The children demonstrate good control and skill in smaller physical movements. For example, they competently use pens, pencils, scissors, glue spreaders, carpentry tools and cooking implements at the play dough table. Children demonstrate a good level of independence in their personal care, for example, helping themselves to drinks, passing around the plates at snack time and putting their coats on unaided.

The group organise the snack session as a social event and ensure that the children have time to eat their snacks, chat to their neighbour and discuss subjects such as how many pieces of apple they have, the shape of the pancakes and what would happen if they planted the apple pips or raisin seeds. The children are offered healthy snacks such as fruit, raisins and muffins. The group promote foods low in sugar, salt, fat and additives by organising snack time to include fresh ingredients and a carbohydrate element for energy. Children aid staff in putting the day's snack pictures on the board with the corresponding word for children to view and read. The children pass around the plates at snack time and remind the children to only take two pieces of apple. The children's special requirements with regard to diet are documented and abided by at all times. The children are learning appropriate hygiene practices, for example, they use antibacterial gel to wash their hands before meals, wash off the paint in the communal washing bowl after using craft mediums and they regularly have opportunities to discuss the relevance of this with staff. However, their health is affected as opportunities to wash their hands thoroughly with warm water are limited so children are not learning the importance of routinely washing their hands at appropriate times. Children's health in an emergency situation is promoted well because there are staff members trained in first aid and the contents of the first aid box is checked on a regular basis.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in an airy, light and welcoming environment. Their craft work is displayed and resources are attractively arranged for easy accessibility and interest. The room is set out in designated areas and the appropriate resources such as storage units are placed within easy reach of the children. These are placed by the creative, number and mark-making tables and the units contain extra resources such as junk modelling boxes, tape, collage items, writing implements, and number equipment. Each drawer is labelled and has the appropriate picture for those children needing extra clues as to where to find a desired resource. The children's safety is promoted as staff carry out informal daily safety checks, identifying hazards, documenting them within an action plan and taking steps to remove or minimise these. However, their safety is affected as they have access to uneven pathways, damaged bark edging material and access to the toy cupboard. Children are gaining a good understanding of taking responsibility and keeping themselves and others safe. They are given clear explanations by staff and understand the importance of turn-taking as they line up carefully, so as not to bump

into each other, tidying toys away in order to prevent accidents, practising road safety on walks and by learning the importance of stranger danger. The group have visits from the local police officer to reinforce the importance of this.

Children independently select toys and activities from a wide range of quality play materials. These are safe, well-maintained and the furniture is appropriate for the size and developmental stage of the children attending. Resources are continually checked by staff ensuring that they remain safe and suitable for the children to use. The group have a clear policy relating to outings which ensures children's safety, for example, any proposed visit is risk assessed for hazards, high adult ratios are maintained, first aid equipment is taken and the staff are vigilant at all times counting the children frequently throughout the visit. Children's welfare is well promoted as staff have a good understanding of child protection procedures and would know how to report and follow up any concerns. Staff training is regularly cascaded to other staff members and the action plan documents that all staff are to attend training in the near future.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, secure and settled, enjoying their time at the pre-school playgroup. The settling-in process is well featured and is carried out at the child's and parents' pace. It gives the key workers time to get to know each child and their family, ensuring that any particular needs or ways of learning are fully understood. The children arrive and are keen to participate in the activities and play opportunities provided. Staff provide stimulating and interesting activities often using themes and projects to develop children's deeper understanding on subjects such as 'Hibernation', Diwali, the 'Solar System' and the 'Postal Service'. The local postman was invited in to tell the children about his work and the home corner was converted into a pretend post office, thus enabling them to develop their understanding in a more practical way. The children are developing their confidence and make good relationships with each other, many having a particular friend they save places for or play together with. Children's personal development is promoted through the caring support and encouragement of experienced and qualified staff. All staff make consistent good use of open questions, taking every opportunity to extend children's learning and encourage them to think further such as asking children the colour and shape of an article or developing their vocabulary when discussing the weather noting the 'big, black, rain clouds'. Younger children's learning and development is carefully planned and promoted. Staff have a good knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and this is used when assessing the younger children's progress. This ensures that children receive appropriate attention and all can participate, at their particular level of understanding with their preferred activity.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress and their overall development is promoted because staff have a good knowledge of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage and combine this with their experience and knowledge of child development and the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Children spend their time purposefully because staff are skilled in deploying their support appropriately, sitting at the children's level and monitoring them throughout the session. The staff allow the children to develop their own ideas such as an impromptu scenario of a bus ride, where the children followed their own ideas, collecting passengers, deciding where to go and who would be the driver. The staff are good at noticing when the children need further encouragement and fresh direction and intercede sensitively.

Children's progress in all areas is balanced as staff use assessment methods which link the information gained from this to identify areas to be covered in future activities. However, some written assessments do not clearly show children's starting points, which could lead to a delay in highlighting potential areas of concern and assessing early progress. Staff observe and monitor the children and record their progress periodically. There are some missing entries and inconsistencies in recording the dates of observations and the achievement completed, which could hamper the planning of the children's future learning.

Children demonstrate their enjoyment as they participate in the wide range of activities which include opportunities to engage in imaginative role play scenarios, construction, outdoor play and a variety of crafts activities, such as painting, play dough and making collages. The children develop their understanding of the world when engaged in imaginative role play scenarios such as pretend vets, travel agents and florists. Children are also encouraged to investigate and explore their environment and to use information technology equipment such as table computers, magnifying glasses, magnets and binoculars. The group operate a daily interest table for a variety of objects such as bark, grass, an aquarium which is changed regularly to include, worms, snails and tadpoles and 'giggle' tubes which make various sounds and noises. Children's knowledge is further extended as they participate in a variety of themed topics, enabling them to look more closely at subjects such as growth, nature and autumn. The children place plants in water, so as to view the growth of the roots, collect and make pictures of leaves and note the changes in the life cycle of the frog.

Children interact well with others, confidently initiating conversations, sharing toys and using language to explain their thoughts. Children enjoy listening to stories and are beginning to understand that print carries meaning, for example, recognising the month and weather words for the calendar chart. Children enjoy opportunities to explore music and rhythm, for example, playing and moving to the beat of their musical instruments and through drama such as acting out rhymes such as 'Going on a Bear Hunt', 'Five Currant Buns', and 'What's the Time Mr Wolf'. Children are beginning to communicate through the printed word such as recognising the snack items on the menu board, writing their names on their work and discussing the sound of the letter of the week. Children have access to a wide variety of crafts and investigate mixing paint, using glue and tape to create junk models as well as using their senses to feel the cold ice melting, touching and crunching the leaves and noting the veins when making leaf prints.

Children have a good understanding of the concept of numbers, for example, counting how many children are present at the snack table, how old they are and recognising this number on the wall display. They compare the size, number and colour of the sorting bears and discuss how big and tall the rocket is. They understand and use positional and size language, for example, big, little, small, large, higher and lower, through activities such as the constructing of towers, running under the parachute seeing the material billowing high into the air and counting how many cups they have. Children's physical development is promoted as they develop an awareness of different forms of movement through organised activities, such as music and movement sessions, marching to the 'Grand Old Duke of York' and action rhymes such as the 'Magic Ring' songs. The garden is well equipped and the children have many opportunities to balance, jump, pedal and climb on the apparatus provided.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed and respected as individuals. This is shown by the approach that staff use in saying 'hello' and 'goodbye' to each parent and child individually, creating named chairs

for the children's outer garments and home pictures and by valuing the children's craft work such as the displays of all the children's pumpkin pictures and plate designs. This helps children to feel appreciated thus building on their self-esteem and confidence thus promoting their sense of belonging. The children's behaviour is good throughout the session as they competently organise turn-taking and sharing. They are kind and thoughtful to each other and to staff, picking up resources when dropped, helping a friend to put on their dressing up clothes and asking politely for help to put their own apron on. At packing up time the children listen to staff and help take toys to the cupboard often carrying items in co-operation with other children offering help, for example, 'let me help you' and 'are you ready to push'. They save places for their special friends and will play with new children helping them to feel secure and happy at the pre-school playgroup. They respond well to adults and the positive approach and good staff role modelling promotes good behaviour and good manners such as helping to pack away the toys cheerfully, taking turns on equipment and remembering to say 'please' and 'thank you'. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children are offered a wide range of opportunities which promote their understanding of society and increase their awareness of other cultures and ways of life. These include celebrations connected to, Eid, Diwali and Christmas. Traditions and special events such as bonfire night, Mother and Father's day are also explored and promoted through discussion and craft work such as making clay Diwali lamps, practicing songs for the Nativity Play and making cards for their parent's on their special day. Children enjoy visits from the fire brigade and police officer as well as a from a parent who brought in special items linked to her Eid festival such as prayer mats, posters of Arabic words and special new clothes bought for the celebration. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have their requirements clearly identified as there is a practical policy relating to this. Staff ensure that this is implemented, working sensitively with individual children and parents to make sure that all are included in the activities and routines.

Parents are kept well informed of the group's procedures and practices through a welcome prospectus, parents' notice boards, policy folders and daily discussions with key worker staff. This is a parent committee run group and the staff are keen to include all parents in the running of the pre-school playgroup. Parents are encouraged to attend the group through the use of a parent's work rota so that they can observe and understand the setting and how their children can access the play and learning. The parents and key worker have a productive relationship, where staff inform parents of their child's activities throughout the session and seek feedback from parents through daily dialogue.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. There is a strong commitment to involving parents fully in the setting and in their children's learning. Parents are kept well informed of their children's educational programme through the welcome prospectus, wall displays, monthly newsletters which documents the areas of play the group are working on. The group operate an 'open door policy' to enable any parents to fully discuss their child's progress, any concerns or worries they may have. The setting actively seeks feedback from parents through the staff's approachability and through questionnaires. Any issue is addressed promptly and this positive attitude ensures that parents' views are valued, standards are maintained and good quality care is provided for each child.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall, children's needs are met. There are robust procedures in place for checking that all staff are suitable to work with children and this is supported by a thorough induction process

for new staff, regular appraisals and staff meetings. This ensures that the pre-school playgroup's practices, procedures and learning programme are fully understood and consistently promoted. All staff are actively involved in re-evaluating and improving their own practice and work closely to improve and enhance the care of the children in their care. For example, questionnaires from parents, yearly risk assessment and changes to the planning are all documented and analysed. An action plan is then devised ensuring all issues are promptly rectified.

Children's care is promoted well through the support provided by experienced and qualified staff. Children benefit from the dedication and good team work of the staff and their wish to improve. There is a strong commitment and wish to improve their practice through training and regular staff meetings. These ensure that staff are kept up to date with the most current information and changes to the running of the group are debated and re-organised to meet the needs of the current children attending. There is a supportive voluntary parents' committee, who ensure that the pre-school playgroup is running smoothly. Parents help with raising funds for extra resources for the children and actively support the group. For example, they organise cakes stalls, accompany children on their outings and help with the day to day organisation of the group through the parents' work rota. Children's play opportunities are developed by the good organisation of space, enabling children to move safely and independently from one activity to another. Thoughtful organisation of all areas ensures that children are offered a wide range of stimulating activities and opportunities. For example, children have space for messy play, imaginative games, floor activities, books and an outdoor play area for physical play. This allows them opportunities to move freely and participate in active games as well as providing a quieter area where they can read and explore books and stories. Children are given sufficient time and resources to complete their activities and tasks and staff work closely together to plan and coordinate the future activities and opportunities for each child's learning.

The leadership and management is good. Children's learning and development is promoted and their overall welfare improved by the good understanding that the play leader has of her role and responsibilities. She ensures that all policies and procedures are clearly understood and adhered to. Staff meet regularly to plan future work, ensuring that the needs of each child are met and the development of all children is promoted. There is an enthusiastic commitment to training and new ways of working and this further develops staff's skills and expertise. Training courses are regularly reviewed and shared with other staff members at the half termly staff meetings, thus promoting all staff's understanding of subjects such as child protection and working with children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Other staff meetings are arranged when needed which allows staff to discuss fully any practice issues. The play leader acts as a good role model, encouraging and appreciating the staff's input which promotes a positive atmosphere within the setting, helping all staff to feel valued and motivated. Sessions are well planned, with a balanced range of activities throughout the sessions and parents are kept informed of this through long, medium and short term plans displayed on the notice board or work area. The children's progress is tracked through ongoing assessments and monitoring. Staff pay particular attention to the planning of future work, ensuring that the needs of each individual child are met and the development of all children is promoted.

Improvements since the last inspection

The pre-school playgroup were asked at the previous inspection to improve the organisation of snack time to become an integrated learning experience for children and to make resources accessible in order to increase the opportunities for children to develop their self-care skills and independence. The group were asked to review policies to ensure that they accurately

reflect the practice of the group and to review the organisation of the session to meet the needs of the children.

The pre-school playgroup has devised and reviewed all policies and these are monitored and changed as necessary. The group have re-evaluated their planning of the group's play sessions to ensure each child has access to a learning environment and one in which they can independently initiate their chosen activity and meet their personal needs. The snack time is organised in small groups with a staff member sitting with the children encouraging discussion on various subjects such as counting, shape and colour recognition. The group have revised the balance of the session so as to include all areas of play, all abilities and making sure the session is not too lengthy. These measures further improve the children's safety, welfare and security.

With regard to the provision of funded nursery education, the group was asked to further develop staff's knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals and continue to develop their ability to extend children's learning.

The pre-school playgroup ensures that their staff are knowledgeable regarding the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage through training and weekly discussions. The activity sheets identify the learning intention and how this can be achieved and extended. Planning has been reassessed since the last inspection and is organised to meet the individual needs of each child. The next stage of the child's learning is identified and this feeds the planning of the curriculum. These measures further improve the children's education and learning.

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.

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 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):

- increase opportunities for children to understand and take responsibility for their own personal hygiene
- improve the daily risk assessment to include areas such as the uneven pathway, the bark edging material, and access to the toy cupboard.

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 further the methods for assessing children so that these show their starting point so that progress can be charted and any issues highlighted at an early stage
- continue to develop and update the assessment records so that this clearly demonstrates children's progress.

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