

Rainbow Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 223584 |
| Inspection date | 25 September 2007 |
| Inspector | Josephine Mary Hammick |
| Setting Address | Scout Corner, Eign Road, Hereford, Herefordshire, HR1 2RX |
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| Registered person | Rainbow Nursery Committee |
| 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 Nursery opened in 1990. It operates from community premises near the centre of Hereford city. The setting serves the local area.

There are currently 16 children from two years to under five years on roll. This includes eight funded children. Children attend a variety of sessions; the majority also stay for a lunch club. Children accompanied by parents also attend a parent and toddler group alongside the pre-school nursery. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and who speak English as an additional language.

The group is open on Monday to Friday during term time only. Sessions are from 09:15 to 13:15.

There are three members of staff who work with the children and students also work on placements. All the staff have early years qualifications. The setting receives support from a mentor teacher and the local authority; it is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and has achieved a bronze quality assurance award.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy and are protected from infection because staff have procedures in place to protect them. For example, tables are wiped prior to being used for snack and meal times and cloths are designated for certain tasks and laundered daily. Children are learning why routines are important through everyday conversations with staff. For example, older children know how germs spread if they don't wash their hands thoroughly after using the toilet.

Children are well cared for in the event of an accident. Sufficient staff hold first aid qualifications to enable them to deal with accidents effectively. Appropriate documentation is kept and shared with parents to safeguard children, including reporting of accidents and administration of medicines. Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through regular routines for washing their hands before snacks and lunch times, after using the toilet and playing outside.

Children learn about leading a healthy lifestyle through everyday practical experiences. At snack time children enjoy a varied selection of menus including fresh fruit and vegetables, toast, low sugar juice and milk. Children have opportunities to experience different tastes and textures, for example, they enjoy tasting exotic fruits to link in with the story of 'Handa's Surprise', or tasting different sorts of cooked fish after studying them in detail. Although parents provide packed lunches for their children, they are learning to make healthy choices about the foods they eat through discussions with staff and through planned activities.

All children benefit from the strong emphasis on physical development. The outdoor play area has been extensively developed to include a designated nursery garden with raised beds for the children to grow their own seeds and plants and to relax under the shaded pergola. They enjoy a range of indoor and outdoor activities which promotes their physical development. For example, they frequently play outside using a range of equipment such as bikes, pedal cars and balancing apparatus. A climbing-frame and music and movement sessions ensure that children benefit from opportunities to stretch and let off steam when they can't go outside for very long. The wide range of resources ensures that activities provide sufficient physical challenges to children of all ages. Children also have opportunities to use cutters, scissors, paintbrushes and other small tools to develop their manipulative skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a well maintained and child-focused environment. Staff prepare the room with a wide range of appropriate resources before children arrive each day to create a stimulating environment for them. Children are able to access a range of developmentally appropriate toys and equipment which ensure they play safely and are happily occupied.

Children's safety is enhanced by sound safety procedures which are used to restrict access to the setting. For example, access is restricted into the nursery by the door being locked, an alarm fitted and visitors being supervised at all times. Children's access to the kitchen and storage area is prohibited by the staff ensuring that the hook is in place at all times when not in use. However, the uncultivated area to the side of the premises is overgrown with weeds and debris, posing a possible safety risk to children. Children enjoy well planned outings to places such as the local farm park to see the cows being milked and the baby animals. Full risk

assessments are carried out before each visit and a high adult-to-child ratio is adhered to at all times. This helps children to remain safe. Children's safety in case of fire is promoted. Regular discussions and fire drills help children to learn how they could evacuate the premises safely to protect themselves. Awareness of fire safety is assured by staff attending training in order to update their knowledge and practices. Children's welfare is well protected. The group have a written policy on child protection and are aware of their duty to protect children. This protects children from harm or neglect.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children are happy to attend, they enjoy their time in the stimulating and well resourced environment. Children throughout the setting are happy, confident and have built secure relationships with each other, their key worker and other staff. Staff provide a good balance of child-initiated and group projects to ensure that children have access to a range of stimulating activities. For example, stories and songs during circle time ensure that play is linked in with the theme of growing; the painting and gluing activities stimulate interest and extend learning in a fun and informal way. The children are keen and motivated by what is available to them and demonstrate a sound understanding of the overall theme.

Children's play and learning is very well supported by staff who have a good understanding of how children learn, making links with the Foundation Stage. However, this is not extended for the children under three years of age because learning is not linked to a framework such as 'Birth to three matters'. This potentially restricts outcomes for younger children. Staff consistently interact with children to extend their learning and play. Children's confidence and self-esteem are developed through the attention and praise they receive for their achievements. Staff value children's creations, displaying them attractively on wall displays or by including them in their own files.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children enjoy being in the setting. They are enthusiastic about the range of activities provided. They concentrate and persevere well, whether playing alone or when benefiting from interaction with their peers or adults. Children are confident to express opinions or suggest ideas. Staff ensure children have plenty of opportunities for conversation and discussions, while the less articulate children have good support to help them join in. Good use is made of questions to foster children's thinking and inspire curiosity.

Children enjoy stories and rhymes. They listen attentively and contribute well to discussions about features of stories; for example, when discussing how characters in a story feel when they grow up, the children, talk about being bigger, taller, being Daddies or Mummies and caring for their babies. Good use is made of props and visual aids. Larger format books and treasure boxes help children to concentrate and enjoy different aspects of stories. Children sing tunefully and with enthusiasm; rhymes are used to stimulate and encourage them to join in. Children also enjoy mark-making in different contexts, whether they are forming patterns in sand and paint or randomly using paint in an abstract way.

Counting and number recognition activities are practical and fun for children. For example, the children enthusiastically clap their hands to signify their friends' age when singing happy birthday. Many can count confidently beyond ten. During routines, play activities and discussions,

children get plenty of opportunities to consolidate their understanding of numbers. For example, they enjoy working out simple number problems, such as how many more cups are needed at each table at snack time, how old are you now, can you count on your fingers and show the older children? Stories and rhymes are used well to support children's awareness of simple number operations. Staff encourage children to check their answers so that, for example, they often spontaneously count using their fingers. Children are separated into two groups of younger and older children at circle times so that they can learn to sit still in a group and enjoy stories at their own developmental level.

Children are inquisitive, keen and interested in how things work. They explore different materials, such as wet and dry sand and play-dough. They find out how different construction toys and other items fit together. They enjoy using technology, for example, by using recycled mobile telephones and cameras and using the compact disc player to instigate an impromptu dancing session. Children confidently handle tools such as scissors. Children design and make their own Lego models, selecting pieces to fit together. They test their pieces out to see which fit and which do not. Children use mathematical language to describe their building's appearance and the position of key features.

Children move confidently. During an enjoyable music session they competently follow different actions, stretching up, wiggling and moving in different directions. They use pedalled vehicles with confidence, and talk about how they feel out of breath after exercise, and the consequent need for a rest.

A varied range of collage and creative materials encourage children's imaginative painting and craft work. They often draw and paint expressively, trying out different techniques and using colour well. However, there are few role play areas available on a daily basis to enable children to fully develop their own ideas which are realistically resourced to promote meaningful play.

Planning and assessment effectively support children's learning. Topics are fun, interesting and relevant to children. Staff spend time researching topics to ensure ideas are exciting. During the current topic on growing things, children enthusiastically recall their own family experiences during discussions and through art and craft work, planting and modelling activities. Plans have clear learning outcomes which are followed through focused activities which stimulate children. Assessment procedures provide a trail of children's progress whilst they attend the pre-school. Parental contributions and early observations help staff to compile an initial profile on each child, but from then on assessments are based on formal observations of children during play and activities. Staff have systems to check children's progress in relation to the stepping stones and early learning goals; they adapt activities to suit children's differing levels of skill or individual need.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual personalities and needs are well known and respected within the setting. The group seek a wide range of information from parents such as children's special interests, festivals that they celebrate at home and things that are special to the family. This information is used to ensure that children are cared for by staff who work with parents to meet their individual needs and to ensure that all children are valued and included in the life of the setting. Children's play is supported by a wide range of resources such as books, dressing-up outfits and dolls which are aimed at promoting positive images of people from a wide range of cultures.

For example, there are links with a nursery in Africa, multilingual welcoming posters and pictures promoting positive images of diversity.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are recognised and well supported by experienced and caring staff. Daily records are kept of children's progress and shared with parents and outside agencies to ensure that the children's changing needs are recognised and can continue to be met. Children behave well, care for each other and older children freely share and take turns. For example, when playing at the water tray, children share different sized containers and take turns using the cups and bowls. They are developing a good understanding of right and wrong and are able to play happily within clearly set boundaries. Children benefit from excellent settling-in procedures which are based around their individual needs, to support them in the transition between home and the setting. For example, parents and carers are actively encouraged to stay with their children until they are settled. This helps children to feel secure and confident in the group.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. The well thought out information booklet includes information on the Foundation Stage framework and the six areas of learning. Photographs and displays help parents and carers to see what the children are doing during their sessions. However, these systems are not extended to promote or inform parents about what area of learning their children are experiencing, enabling them to acknowledge and support their children's developing skills. Newsletters and notices on the information board keep parents and carers informed about activities or the many social events. There is an active daily rota of parent helpers. Parents are always welcome to view or discuss their child's file informally or formally through appointments. This enables parents to be involved and enhance their own child's learning.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The premises are well organised and good use is made of the space available. All staff work well together and demonstrate enthusiasm for creating a learning environment that stimulates children of all ages. Children are well cared for by suitably qualified staff who have been appropriately vetted to ensure that they are suitable and have sufficient skills and knowledge to work with children.

Policies and procedures are clear, comprehensive and regularly updated. All staff are familiar with their content to ensure children are well cared for. There is a high emphasis on staff training and working with other professionals, such as those from the local authority. As a result, children benefit from practices which are in line with current ideas and legislation.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is good. There is a strong commitment by staff to develop provision to promote learning in all areas; they are competent within their roles and have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage. These skills and knowledge are supporting the children's learning and development well.

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 provider agreed to: review the arrangements for providing staff with information on current health and safety legislation; review the arrangements to ensure the room is maintained at an adequate temperature and to review the complaints procedures to ensure it reflects current information about Ofsted's role. Since then staff have accessed health and safety training in order to update their practice, purchased thermometers for both ends of the play-room and have included contact details for the regulator in the complaints policy. Children benefit from the staff's improved safety awareness, the room being maintained at a comfortable temperature and an effective complaints procedure to ensure their well-being at all times.

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):

- ensure hazards in the outside play space are made inaccessible to children. This refers to the nettles in the uncultivated area to the side of the building
- improve outcomes for children under three years by using an approach in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework
- ensure children have regular opportunities for role play.

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 systems to promote parents' awareness of the areas of learning in which children are involved.

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