

Ragamuffins Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	205334
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Inspector	Elenora Griffin
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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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Ragamuffins Nursery opened in 1994 and is one of two privately owned nurseries. It operates from five rooms in a detached property on the outskirts of Redditch. A maximum of 33 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07:30 to 18:00 all year round. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 56 children aged from three months to under five years on roll. Of these, 15 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local and surrounding areas, and attend for a variety of sessions.

The nursery employs 11 members of staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit from being cared for in a clean and healthy environment. Staff are aware of good hygiene procedures and follow these consistently throughout the day, acting as positive role models for children. Children are beginning to learn about personal hygiene, for example, as they are encouraged to wash their hands before lunch. Children are well protected from infection and are taken good care of if they have an accident or become ill. Most staff have completed first aid training and fully stocked first aid boxes are maintained. The sick child policy and medication records enable children to be cared for appropriately. Detailed infection control guidelines, with illness exclusion periods, are available to share with parents, and medication is administered following parental instruction.

Children have their dietary and nutritional needs well met. Parents have the choice of providing lunches and snacks, or of taking advantage of hot meals and nutritional snacks provided through the nursery. There is a vegetarian option each day and staff ensure that children's individual dietary requirements are met. Although babies do not benefit from having key people take care of nappy changing and feeding times, their individual feeding routines are followed, and staff on duty will sit one-to-one with babies when feeding them. Otherwise, meals times are social occasions when children sit together to eat food and to enjoy one another's company. Older children recognise the importance of staying healthy. They have an aerobics session every morning and they know that they do this to keep themselves healthy, and explain that it is good for their bones. They also know that it is important to eat fruit in order to stay healthy. Children explain that they eat grapes, apples, pears, bananas and plums at nursery to keep themselves healthy.

Babies and young children are active and enjoy moving around and exploring their environments. They walk and crawl, and receive appropriate support from staff as they start to sit up and as they begin to walk. Children thrive from regular opportunities to be active outdoors, both in the garden area and when they go for walks to the local park, woods and shops. In the garden babies and young children enjoy the sensations of crawling on the grass and running up and down the natural slopes of the lawn. They are developing their control and coordination as they begin to use the climbing frame and slide, with support from staff. Older children are also physically active throughout the day and begin to refine their control and co-ordination, for example, as they decide on imaginative movements to make during aerobics sessions. They jump, wiggle their hips, do star jumps and move up and down at varying speeds. Children show an increasing awareness of themselves and others. They avoid collisions as they ride on bikes and say, 'excuse me', to get past one another. Children's understanding of moving safely is developed by staff as they ask them to stretch their arms out to check they have enough room for their aerobic activities. Children have great fun participating in regular art and craft activities which support the development of hand and finger control. They handle tools, objects and construction materials with increasing control as they create using junk modelling and make musical shakers which they later enjoy playing. Consequently, they demonstrate increasing dexterity as they create.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The nursery is friendly and welcoming to children and parents. Each child has a peg and place for their own belongings, and there are bright informative displays throughout the building. Children in each room enjoy ample space in which to move about, spread out with activities, rest and relax, and there is a separate sleep room for babies where they enjoy having fresh clean sheets for each nap. Children benefit from having a broad range of suitable toys, play materials, activities and resources, which they access through a wide variety of planned activities. Children are safeguarded from harm and neglect. This is because staff have a good knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and comprehensive Local Safeguarding Children Board policies and procedures are readily available for staff to refer to.

Children enjoy being cared for in a safe and secure indoor environment, and they are developing a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They practice the emergency escape plan on a regular basis, have an age-appropriate understanding of why they put on sun-cream before going outside, and discuss the rules and behaviour that keep them safe with staff. For example, they discuss the amount of vehicles being used in the garden and the need to limit these in order to limit the risk of accidents. Children have great fun playing in a large enclosed garden with both concrete and grass areas for different types of play. Although daily checks are made of the garden, potential hazards posed by objects such as pieces of gardening equipment, are not made inaccessible to children. Children continue to play safely because staff are watchful, ensuring that they stay safe and that they are closely supervised on climbing equipment. However, the potential hazards that are accessible to children limit their freedom to explore and enjoy the environment, and potentially compromise their safety.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are well settled and confident in a caring and friendly environment. They feel valued and develop good self-esteem because they see their photographs all around them. They are forming friendships and enjoy pointing out their friends, as well as themselves, in low-level photographs. Children build on their natural curiosity as they actively explore the activities and resources provided by staff. For example, they enjoy the sensory experience of playing with foam and discover the treasure basket of everyday objects. Children use their imaginations as they use sponges and containers to pretend to wash walls, and to put sun-cream on. However, babies and young children's ability to independently explore and extend their experiences is limited. This is because the organisation of resources limits the variety of activities and resources that children can independently access and explore in their own time. Nevertheless, children continue to make good progress because they participate in a wide variety of planned activities offered by staff, many of which stimulate children to explore using their senses. For example, dry and cooked pasta play, play-dough and body painting.

Detailed planning ensures that children experience activities that effectively support their development across all areas. This is because staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the, 'Birth to three matters' framework, which they use to plan and evaluate activities. Consequently, children's development is well supported by staff who use a range of methods to help consolidate and extend their learning. Staff provide words for children's actions and experiences to help develop their vocabulary. They engage with children joining in with their play, encouraging them to get involved in activities and listen to what they have to contribute. They ask open-ended questions to check children's knowledge and understanding, and begin

to develop their conversational skills. Staff and children form positive, trusting relationships. Staff comfort children and share cuddles with them. They get to know children well and track their progress through completing developmental records on a regular basis. The comments that staff make when completing these provide a wonderful celebration of children achievements and an excellent record of children's development and progress.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. This supports the effectiveness of the curriculum planning for children, which is excellent because it is flexible and responsive to children's needs and interests. Children are actively involved in the planning and its implementation. This is because staff brainstorm with children at the start of each topic, which leads to an increased range of ideas for activities that are based on children's own interests. On a daily basis this wonderful atmosphere of shared ownership continues as staff discuss the different activities available, and make decisions together with the children about what they will be doing. Staff get to know children well and adapt activities for children working at different levels, and in order to meet individual needs. Staff are enthusiastic and committed to improving what they provide and how they work with children. For example, they are completing Nursery talk training and are implementing the new skills that they are learning, seeing a marked improvement in the communication skills of the children they work with. Children make good progress. The challenges set for them are appropriate and staff effectively draw on a range of methods to support children's learning and development.

Children are confident and are eager to talk to their friends and staff about events in their life. They are interested and excited by the activities on offer, and therefore become actively engaged, motivated to learn from their experiences. Children are developing a good understanding of their feelings and talk about the things that make them happy and the things that may make them sad. Staff support children well to develop their negotiating skills as they discuss and agree what stories they have, songs they will sing and how long they will play for. Children form good relationships with adults and their peers. They are able to use speech to organise and explore real and imagined experiences, ideas and feelings, and demonstrate this as they tell stories to adults that are based on real and imagined events. The children know many songs and rhymes, which they request at circle time and repeat from memory. They are able to sit quietly as they listen to stories, paying attention to the reader and joining in at appropriate times. Children enjoy rhyming sounds and explore initial sounds, recognising the letter and sound that their name begins with. Children freely access the graphics table where they begin to attempt to write for a variety of purposes, with some children able to write recognisable letters.

Children use numbers spontaneously in their play and daily activities. They attempt to count the number of ladders in their constructions and the number of children present. They are able to count reliably up to 10 and beyond, and have an increasing understanding about how numbers can be used to represent objects. Children are beginning to use mathematical ideas and methods to solve practical problems. For example, as they play with Mobilo to create ladders, comparing the lengths and identifying which is longer and which is shorter as they build side by side. Children experience shape, position, size and quantity through numerous activities in the nursery. They enjoy regular cooking activities, playing with sand and water using a variety resources, and construct with various toys and materials. Children actively solve problems as they construct and use language, such as more and less, appropriately. They are beginning to explore the concept of time through fun activities that have been incorporated into the daily

routine. For example, they race against the clock to tidy up before the horse pops out of the clock at the top of the hour.

Children are able to explore colour, texture, shape, form and space through the wide variety of activities that staff plan to stimulate children's creativity. Children discover a variety of natural, open-ended objects in 'feely' baskets and explore bottles containing different materials that change in colour and create different sounds. Children also enjoy the sensations they feel as they explore a wide variety of substances introduced to them through messy play. For example, they play with foam, cornflower mixtures, as well as sand and water. The children are inquisitive and through questioning and discussion they find out about and identify some features of living things, objects and events they observe. Children know their environment well and talk confidently about the things that they like. They explore the natural world and wider community through regular walks to the woods, shops and park. Children listen to music throughout the day, access musical instruments and move imaginatively to music during aerobic activities. Children are able to use their imaginations during art and design, music, movement and role-play, and are able to develop their own ideas as staff encourage them to take the lead. Consequently, children are able to express and develop their own ideas, thoughts and feelings through activities and play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children and adults are treated with equal concern, and this is well supported through comprehensive policies and procedures. Children's individual needs and routines are effectively met by staff who get to know parents and children well, and adhere to parent and child preferences. Staff are proactive and have established clear policies and procedures, undertaken training and developed strong links with support agencies, in order to effectively support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities that they may care for. Children are developing an excellent understanding of diversity and the world around them. They find out about the wider world through activities such as creating plates of food from around the world and through learning about a wide variety of celebrations and festivals, to include Diwali, Chinese New Year and Easter. Staff endeavour to make all children feel included and valued, and therefore incorporate the cultural and religious celebrations from their homes within planning for the whole nursery. Children are beginning to consider the needs of others. For example, they learn basic sign language and take part in sponsored events to raise money for others.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Behaviour is exceptional throughout the nursery. Babies and young children's behaviour is fully supported through being in an environment that encourages good behaviour. This is because staff ensure that they are stimulated and actively involved in various activities. Staff effectively support children to interact positively with one another, and help children to learn and understand the rules that keep them safe and healthy. Older children actively contribute to the development of the positive behaviour rules that they follow. Through support from staff, children develop excellent negotiation skills, which helps them to compromise and to reach agreements with adults and children alike. Children have a very good awareness of right and wrong in line with their stage of development. They are polite and use, 'please' and 'thank you' spontaneously when playing with their friends. Practitioners are skilled and sensitive in their management of children, and they draw on expert practice to develop behaviour management strategies whenever challenges arise.

Parents are provided with excellent written and verbal information about the nursery. The processes for settling-in and making the transition between rooms are very well planned and flexible in order to meet the needs of children. Communication between staff and parents is highly effective and forms the basis for the development of positive relationships. Babies and young children enjoy excellent continuity of care because information between home and the nursery is shared daily through dairies, which staff talk through with parents at the end of each day. Consequently, children are comfortable and well settled because they see parents and staff acting together and giving consistent messages. Parents are kept well informed about up coming events, topics and how children's learning and development is supported, through monthly newsletters and bright informative notice boards.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents are very well informed about their children's achievements and progress. Staff talk to parents each day about what their child has been doing and what they have enjoyed the most. Consequently, parents are able to engage their children in conversations about what they have been learning. Two way communication is actively encouraged right from the start so that parents also share what they know about their child. Through annual meetings between staff and parents of pre-school children, parents are able to actively feed into the assessment and planning process for their child. As a result, children benefit from having their learning and development supported by staff and parents who work effectively together. Bright displays of children's work celebrate their achievements and planning sheets are clearly displayed so that parents can see what their child will be doing next. Parents are encouraged to become actively involved in their children's learning. For example, children take turns taking home 'Rosie Rabbit' for the weekend, parents complete a dairy of the weekend with their child and, with the help of staff, children share these with their friends when they return to nursery. As a result, parents become actively involved, staff develop their knowledge and understanding of the children, children feel valued and they develop confidence sharing information with others.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The organisation of the nursery positively supports outcomes for children. Children are protected by a robust recruitment and vetting procedure, which ensures that they are cared for by staff who are suitable and have appropriate skills for the post they hold. Staff have a high regard for the well-being of children and enjoy spending time with them. They are actively engaged with children throughout the day and are enthusiastic about what they do. The organisation of group sizes and staff deployment contributes positively to children's care and enjoyment, and ensures that ratios are maintained at all times. However, children do not benefit from having key people consistently meet their intimate care needs and feeding routines. This is because the organisation of the key worker system for babies and young children does not minimise the number of carers for the individual child.

The leadership and management is good. Management have established clear aims and objectives, which they encourage and support staff to work towards, as a team. However, opportunities for improving outcomes for children are not always maximised because there are no formal systems in place for the monitoring and evaluation of the provision. As a result, strengths are not always built upon and areas for improvement not always identified. For example, children are well supported to develop self-care skills but not challenged to develop skills using a knife and fork at lunch time. An excellent range of creative activities are provided but not made readily available for children to explore and create with independently. However,

children continue to make good progress because staff are highly motivated and enthusiastic, and as a whole the nursery is committed to improving the quality of care and education.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to make improvements to record keeping for the administration of medication and accidents. The provider was also asked to ensure that the complaints procedure is made easily available for parents. The provider now ensures that medication records are signed by parents when medication has been administered, that records are confidentially maintained, and that accident records show the full date. The complaints procedure is now clearly displayed on the parents' notice board.

At the last inspection the provider was asked to improve the provision of nursery education through raising staff's awareness of the Foundation Stage curriculum to enable them to further improve and plan activities to extend children's learning. Staff now receive regular training on various aspects of implementing the curriculum. As a result of this, children's learning is being well planned for and staff are developing new approaches that enable them to more effectively support the development of children's capabilities.

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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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):

- improve the organisation of the key worker system in order to minimise the number of carers for the individual child
- improve safety in the outside area by ensuring that potential hazards are made inaccessible to children
- continue to improve outcomes for children through increasing the range of activities and resources that are readily accessible for them to explore independently.

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):

- continue to improve outcomes for children through developing effective systems for the monitoring and evaluation of the provision so that strengths are built upon and areas for improvement identified.

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