

Little Rascals Day Nursery (Station Rd)

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	319382
Inspection date	12 December 2007
Inspector	Christine Snowdon
Setting Address	Station Road, Wellgarth, Crossgates, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS15 7JY
Telephone number	0113 2326757
E-mail	
Registered person	LITTLE RASCALS CHILDCARE 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 satisfactory. 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?

Little Rascals Day Nursery opened in March 1997. It is one of a group of three privately owned nurseries. It operates from a converted school building, located in Crossgates, near Leeds. The nursery serves families from the local area and wider community. A maximum of 60 children may attend the setting at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 all through the year except for bank holidays. There is a fully enclosed area for outside play.

There are currently 96 children aged from three months to five years on roll. Of these, 22 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery supports children with disabilities.

A total of 19 staff work with the children, this includes the manager and assistant manager who are both qualified and supernumerary. Ten members of staff hold a level 3 qualification in childcare and seven hold a level 2. The nursery is currently taking part in the Leeds Quality Assurance Scheme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean and well maintained environment where they learn some good hygiene practices. Staff talk to the children about the importance of hand washing and children say it is to 'get rid of the germs'. Most children know to wash their hands before meals and snacks and after using the toilet. However, babies' and toddlers' hands are not cleaned before their snack. There are good procedures in place for nappy changing with staff using gloves and aprons. The changing mat is sprayed and cleaned down in-between changes. Parents are advised of any childhood illnesses and information is given. These practices, along with the setting's sickness policy, help reduce the risk of cross-infection.

Children are learning about the benefits of healthy eating through their topic work and the posters displayed in the setting which promote the 'five a day' message. Their health is promoted through the varied and nutritious diet they receive. All food is prepared and cooked on the premises using fresh food and vegetables. On the day of inspection they have meat, potatoes, fresh vegetables and gravy for lunch. At snack time children enjoy a good selection of fresh fruit. Mealtimes are generally a sociable and relaxed time when children eat together in their own rooms and enjoy their food. However, this is not always the case in the blue room.

Children enjoy a good range of physical activities that contributes well to their healthy lifestyle. Babies and toddlers develop good coordination skills as they crawl around the floor and through the play tunnel, pulling themselves up onto their feet. They hold out their hands for staff and enjoy practising their walking skills. Older children enjoy being active in the outdoor area where they run around in the fresh air and pedal and steer their wheeled toys along the marked tracks. Indoors they enjoy the regular music and movement sessions. Children are developing good hand-eye coordination as they hold and use scissors, pencils and tools correctly. Older children pour their own drinks and spread their own butter and jam at breakfast time. All children are provided with age appropriate cutlery at mealtimes and use it very well.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are cared for in very child-orientated areas within the nursery. They enjoy the many wall displays and the bright and welcoming atmosphere. They are greeted warmly on arrival by the staff team and are eager to go off to their chosen play. The four nursery rooms are well organised and effectively support the children's varying ages and stages of development. The nursery is cleaned to a good standard and there are appropriate arrangements in place for this. However, some of the soft furnishings in the baby room which are used regularly for the toddlers to play and sleep on are stained and tired looking. There is a good range of resources in the nursery which are age appropriate and well organised at child height. As a result, children self-select the resources and instigate their own play and learning.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment because staff take effective steps to reduce any potential risk to children's safety. For example, they use a key pad security system to ensure no unauthorised access and the number is changed periodically. Full and detailed risk assessments are carried out regularly and notices are displayed in every room to remind staff to check and eliminate risks. As a result, children play safely and freely in all areas. However, whilst staff closely supervise babies and toddlers in the highchairs, safety straps are not being

used to ensure their overall safety. Children are learning to keep themselves safe by following the nursery's rules and safe practices. For example, staff gently remind children not to run indoors and to sit correctly on their chairs for fear of slipping. There are good emergency evacuation procedures in place and staff and children take part in regular fire drills.

The welfare of the children is safeguarded as staff have an appropriate knowledge and awareness of the procedures to protect children. The staff have attended training and have all the relevant information to hand should they have any concerns. There are policies and procedures in place and these have been recently updated. Whilst the manager is able to verbally explain the procedure she would follow in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff, there is no written procedure and this is a breach of regulations.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are very happy and settled and enjoy their time in the nursery. They show a strong sense of belonging and are motivated and stimulated in their environment. Babies and young children benefit from the very positive interaction with the staff and enjoy the close contact with lots of hugs and cuddles. Staff have a good knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and plan and provide a stimulating range of play experiences for all young children. For example, toddlers thoroughly enjoy the musical instruments and show pleasure and delight as they bang on the drum. Young children enjoy experimenting with water and staff actively engage to assist play and learning. For example, children independently fill their watering cans and pour it out over their hands. They fill the shells with water and staff talk to them about big shells and little ones. They are all very excited and are eagerly awaiting the Christmas festivities. They dress up on party day and join in enthusiastically with the newly learnt Christmas songs. Children benefit from the good role play activities and those in the yellow room enjoy the shoe shop, where they try on various styles and put them into the boxes. Whilst these children wait for their lunch the staff purposefully engage them in activities, such as singing rhymes and recognising their body parts. This ensures a relaxed and sociable lunchtime.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Due to recent staffing changes in the pre-school room, not all staff have a clear understanding of the Foundation Stage. Equipment and resources are used well to provide a well balanced and stimulating environment. A variety of teaching styles are used from individual to small and large groups. Staff ask children questions as they play, which helps to extend and develop their understanding. Staff observe and assess children's learning effectively through spontaneous and planned observations. This information is used well to update the children's individual profile records on a regular basis.

Children are confident and happy in the setting. They are eager to take part in their chosen activities and enjoy the socialisation with their friends. They form positive relationships and are generally constructive in their play. They are developing some good independence skills as they pour their own drinks and spread the butter and jam on to their toast at breakfast time. Children enjoy the social interaction with their peers and as a result, they are forming close friendships with one another and ask the staff if their friends will be coming to nursery. They play well together, sharing resources and taking turns. For example, they willingly take turns to use the computer without intervention from staff. Children are developing a good interest in books and they select and use them independently. This is fostered by the good selection on offer to them. They enjoy the range of opportunities for mark making and are gaining a

good understanding of writing for a purpose as they pretend to write their Christmas cards whilst playing in the office area. There is some good labelling within the setting including labels on resources and displays. However, children have few opportunities to see their name in print as it is only used on their coat peg out in the corridor. Their names on the wall displays are too high and whilst they regularly access their profile folders they do not recognise their name as it is written in capital letters.

Children are developing a good understanding of number and some can recognise numbers in print. For example, they tell the inspector they are three and point to the corresponding number on the laptop. They use number and mathematical language as they play and talk to staff. Children say they have seen four Santas and hold up four fingers to demonstrate this. When playing with the building blocks they describe them as massive and big. Children spend a good deal of time in the construction area where they develop excellent cooperative skills as they work together productively in a small group to complete their chosen task. They tell the inspector they are building an aeroplane and set out the large wooden pieces along the floor. They get out their hammer and say they are nailing it together and another child puts on the goggles before using the saw. Some older and more able children are becoming very confident and knowledgeable as they use the computer with increasing skill and control. They follow the programme well and are able to move the items around the screen and into the corresponding coloured boxes. They use their skills well to help and assist other children who are less able.

There is a good range of craft materials and evidence shows that children enjoy different malleable materials such as play dough and clay. Staff plan a range of art and craft opportunities to link into the topics and themes. However, these are very much adult-led, with little opportunity for children to develop their own imagination and free expression. This is evident from both the past and present examples of their work. Whilst they have planned opportunities to experience the sounds and rhythms when using musical instruments these are not freely accessible, therefore children are unable to use them independently. Children enjoy singing and do so with enthusiasm, building up a good repertoire of new and familiar songs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The staff know the children and their families very well and there is a homely and welcoming feel to the nursery. Everyone is greeted warmly on arrival and children easily separate from their carers and begin their play. Children enjoy a good range of experiences that promote their understanding of their local environment and the wider world. They go for walks around the local community and have visitors who link into their nursery topics. They celebrate cultures and customs other than their own and benefit from the range of resources, which includes books, dressing up clothes, posters and puzzles. The settling-in procedure and discussion with parents enable staff to have a good awareness of their children's individuality and ensure continuity of care.

Behaviour is generally good and children follow the simple rules and instructions. Staff have a calm and consistent approach and as a result, children are cooperative and know what is expected of them. Children play harmoniously together, taking turns and sharing resources well. Children know their efforts are valued by the staff as they receive positive praise and encouragement for all they do and say. They enjoy receiving reward stickers and proudly show them to the inspector. As a result, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. There are professional, friendly relationships in place which contribute significantly to the children's well-being within the nursery. Parents receive detailed information including a prospectus, regular newsletters and daily verbal feedback. They have good opportunities to be involved in their children's learning. For example, they are regularly invited to take part in sessions with their children, such as the Christmas festivities. Parents take an active interest in their children's profile folders and children in the blue room are very proud to show them what they have achieved. The nursery has a wide range of policies and procedures in place and some are summarised in the prospectus. However, these are not readily available to parents as they are stored in the office area and available on request. The setting obtains all relevant information from the parents at the time of admission, including their children's medical and dietary needs. However, the current consent form for dealing with medical emergencies lacks clarity. At inspection, parents provide very positive feedback and are happy with their children's progress.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Good systems are in place to ensure the continued suitability of staff and there are robust procedures in place for their recruitment and induction. However, Ofsted was not informed of the changes to the management structure made to cover maternity leave and this is a breach of regulations. During the inspection, records were checked to ensure that those holding management positions were both qualified and suitable. Staff are effectively deployed within most areas of the nursery and there are good staff-to-child ratios in operation. However, the recent changes to pre-school room staff and their lack of leadership and organisation skills result in lunchtimes being chaotic when children become boisterous and bored. However, the nursery has plans in place to rectify this. The nursery has a stable staff team and they are committed to continuing with their own development. There are good arrangements in place to support the staff, for example, appraisals and staff meetings. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. The recent staff changes have meant that less experienced staff have had to take on more responsibility. There are some systems in place for reviewing the educational practice and monitoring children's progress. For example, staff evaluate activities as part of their planning, and record their progress. Whilst management support the staff and are involved in assisting them in their planning, this system is not sufficiently robust to ensure its overall effectiveness. As a result there are clear areas for improvement to ensure that children receive a broad and balanced curriculum.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the setting was asked to ensure that vetting procedures are completed on all staff and to make sure that changing procedures were fully implemented to reduce any potential health risks. As a result of the rigorous recruitment and vetting procedures now in place, all staff working with the children are safe and suitable to do so. Staff are conscientious and follow the nappy changing procedures, which are effective in reducing cross-infection.

At the last inspection of funded education the nursery was asked to provide more opportunities for the children to develop their skills with information and communication technology. The children now have free access to the computer area and are developing very good skills as a result of this.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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 satisfactory. 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 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 hygiene practice to ensure babies' and toddlers' hands are cleaned prior to snack and meal times and the large floor cushions are all kept in a clean and hygienic condition
- ensure children are safe when in the high chairs by using appropriate safety restraints
- ensure the child protection policy includes the procedure to be followed should an allegation be made against a member of staff
- improve parents' accessibility to the setting's policies and procedures and obtain their written consent to seek medical advice in an emergency
- ensure Ofsted is notified of significant changes
- ensure staff in the pre-school room are deployed effectively to ensure children remain focused and stimulated throughout the session (this also applies to nursery education).

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):

- provide more opportunities for children to see their written name and ensure labelling is compatible with children's learning
- provide more opportunities for children to develop their individuality and creativity; and enable children to select and use musical instruments independently
- further develop the systems to monitor and assess the effectiveness of the planning and assessment to ensure the activities and experiences provided will cover all areas of learning and offer children a broad and balanced curriculum.

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