

Ramsden Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	203892
Inspection date	23 January 2008
Inspector	Lisa Paisley
Setting Address	Dowsett Lane, Ramsden Heath, Billericay, Essex, CM11 1JL
Telephone number	07980 327 830 01268 710791
E-mail	
Registered person	Ramsden Pre-School
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?

Ramsden Preschool is run by a committee. It opened in 1964 and operates from the main hall and one room of the village hall building, in Ramsden Heath, Essex. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.30 to 12.15 and Monday and Wednesday afternoons from 12.45 to 15.30 term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 63 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 44 receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The pre-school employs 15 staff. Ten of the staff, including both managers, hold appropriate early years qualifications. Five staff members are currently attending training. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children benefit from being cared for in an environment where an exceptional standard of hygiene practices are maintained. All children learn about hygiene routines through washing their hands appropriately, for example, after cooking and creative activities and before snack time. Visual pictorial notices for hand washing provide children with effective reminders to wash their hands, consequently, they understand the importance of hand washing. Children have access to liquid soap, warm running water and paper hand towels, ensuring that the risk of cross-infection is minimised. Effective procedures are in place to ensure items in all the first aid boxes are suitable for their purpose, in date and checked regularly. Over half the staff hold a current first aid certificate and staff have excellent awareness of the medical needs of individual children and procedures in the event of requiring medication, an accident or if they become unwell. Consequently, the children receive excellent care if they become ill or have an accident.

Children enthusiastically enjoy a very wide variety of activities that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They effectively use an excellent range of activities on a regular basis, for example, the climbing frame, tricycles, balancing beam and the parachute. Children enjoy climbing, balancing and playing ball games. Children's finer manipulative hands skills are successfully promoted through the range of tools such as scissors, pencils, paint brushes, threading and puzzles that children use well. Consequently children are progressing exceptionally well in their physical development. Children are able to rest and relax in comfortable surroundings according to their individual needs and daily routines.

Children develop healthy eating habits as staff encourage them to try different foods such as fresh fruit, cheese, pita bread and dips. Snacks at the pre-school are balanced and nutritious as all food that is offered is low in salt and sugar content and is non-processed. Fresh drinking water and milk are freely available throughout the session ensuring children remain hydrated. Snack times are a relaxed and sociable time where children have opportunities to talk about recent experiences and healthy lifestyles, for example, 'what foods are good for us'. Younger children are effectively supported by the staff as they will sit with the children providing cuddles and reassurance. Clear, effective and robust procedures are in place for the preparation of food to ensure all food is safe for children to eat. Staff maintain excellent written records for each child to ensure their individual health and dietary requirements are met. These are clearly displayed in the kitchen, the hall notice board and on children's name label, this ensures that staff can check individual dietary requirements and preferences at any time.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The pre-school has highly effective and secure measures in place, ensuring that risks to children's safety, both indoors and outdoors, are minimised such as clear procedures for the safe arrival and departure of children to and from the setting. Extensive formal risk assessments are effective in ensuring that potential hazards to children are minimised, for example, all low-level electrical sockets are protected, all fire exits are clearly labelled, effectively maintained and are in working order and the kitchen is inaccessible to children. There are comprehensive and clearly written safety procedures in place that staff know about and are consistently applied. Staff have an effective awareness of how to organise space, furniture and equipment enabling children to

move freely and independently between activities and different play areas. As a result, children feel confident within the pre-school and are safe and secure.

Children are cared for in a very positive play and learning environment. The hall is brightly decorated with posters, photographs and letter and number print. The premises are very clean, well lit, and effectively heated, ensuring that it is suitable for children to use at all times. Resources are well organised so they are attractive and accessible to children. Children enthusiastically select their own play resources which are appropriate to their ages and stages of development. The extensive range of play equipment and resources are stored at children's height, promoting independence and choice. Children learn about keeping themselves safe through regular fire drills and by gentle reminders from staff such as tidying away toys, walking around indoors sensibly and safely and using play equipment appropriately.

Children are exceptionally well protected as staff have an excellent understanding of safeguarding procedures and how to keep children safe. A written policy is in place and staff are able to recognise signs of abuse and know who to contact if they are concerned about a child in their care. Policies and procedures have been amended to reflect current practices with regard to the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). Designated staff members have attended recent training and this information has been effectively passed onto the staff, this ensures all team members are fully informed about their role and procedures in safeguarding children. Parents are informed of the group's responsibility with regard to safeguarding children, reassuring parents of their child's well-being and safety.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children attending the pre-school are very confident, secure and happy as they are cared for and taught by staff who are highly motivated and enthusiastic. Children benefit from the extensive range of interesting and age-appropriate toys, resources, tools and equipment which are made freely available to them at all times. Free-flow play operates between designated play areas within the indoor environment. There are regular opportunities for outdoor play providing children with the opportunity to exercise. All children are busy and occupied in purposeful and worthwhile activities throughout the session. They have developed the ability to negotiate and co-operate well to maintain harmonious relationships. Adults interact with the children very well to maintain children's interest and to promote their learning. Young children are provided with a very good range of activities, for example, sand, rice, play dough, puzzles, books, construction and role play.

Young children are confident and are making very good progress. Developmental records are completed on the younger children, ensuring that their needs are being met and activities are appropriately planned. Staff have obtained the 'Birth to three matters' framework which they use effectively to plan play and learning opportunities that support and encourage the development of the two-year-olds who attend the pre-school.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a very good understanding and demonstrate excellent knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum, 'early childhood development' and 'how children play and learn'. An effective 'key person' system is used successfully to ensure that children's individual abilities are identified and respected. Children's observation and assessment records contain good levels of information. Planning records show

that children receive regular opportunities to develop their learning in all areas, whilst the assessment procedures ensure the key person monitors development on a regular basis. Staff successfully provide children with an extensive range of activities that are interesting and stimulating, ensuring their interest is captured and successfully maintained. Activities and play experiences are varied providing children with effective play and learning experiences supporting their overall developmental progress. The organisation of the session is free play with an emphasis on children's choice, planned circle activities, for example, physical exercise and registration times, the children clearly enjoy their time at the pre-school.

Children are very happy and confident within the pre-school, they form very close relationships with staff and their friends and they are very interested in their play. Children are happy and settled in their learning and are purposeful in their play. As a result they are developing positive attitudes towards their learning as they work hard and concentrate on completing self-chosen tasks. They have ongoing opportunities to write for a purpose, with free access to writing and mark-making materials and many children are able to write their own names. Role play equipment supports children in developing communication skills, for example, the opticians. Staff participate effectively in role play with children to help them learn about everyday activities. The book corner is very warm, inviting and comfortable for children to sit in. Children very much enjoy reading and listening to stories, they share books with each other, talking about the pictures and looking at words. Children particularly enjoy reading alongside staff who use the opportunity to ask them questions, maintain their interest and help bring the story to life. They have very good opportunities to learn about numbers and counting through daily routines, for example, singing 'Five Little Fire-fighters'. The good range of resources such as puzzles, maths mosaic set, lotto and matching games help continue to support children's learning. All the children are confident counters as they can count up to 10 and beyond. Cooking, sand and water activities provide children with very good opportunities to learn about weight, size and capacity.

Children have good opportunities to find out about the natural world through topics and themes, for example, mini-beasts and they go on trips out such as the Hanningfield Reservoir. People are also invited into the pre-school to talk about their work such as the fire safety officer and the police community support officer. Children are developing a very good awareness of the uses of information technology in everyday life and are able to operate equipment, for example, domestic items, magnifying glasses and binoculars. Older and more able children operate age-appropriate computer programmes and they support younger children in using the laptop. Their imaginations and free expression are effectively promoted through the range of activities such as play dough, painting, rice, sand, role play, craft activities and music and movement. Role play is effectively linked into current topics and themes such as 'keeping healthy' and the optician and dentist. Children enjoy music and movement, using musical instruments freely to experiment with rhythm and sound patterns. Their physical skills are effectively promoted through a variety of mediums, for example, the climbing frame, tricycles, scooters, balls, hoops and bean bags. However, outdoor play could be further developed to ensure children consistently have purposeful play and learning experiences. Children's finer manipulative skills are successfully promoted through the very good range of activities such as threading, puzzles, building with small bricks and mark-making tools. As a result they are making very good progress in all areas of their physical development.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children benefit from having access to a range of play resources which promote positive images of diversity and they participate in activities which promote their awareness of different festivals

and cultures, for example, Japanese Children's Day, Rosh Hashanah, Christmas, Guy Fawkes and Shrove Tuesday. However, this is not fully developed as strategies have not been put in place to extend further gender equality, consequently, how children learn thorough play is not always fully extended. Children are cared for by staff who work closely with parents to meet individual children's needs. They recently participated in making a 'Personality Quilt' where children made their own individual creative square and this was put together in a quilt and is on display. This helps to ensure that all children feel valued. Children enjoy good relationships with staff, building on their well-being and confidence. Each child is valued and respected as an individual as staff know the children's individual personalities well. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities take part fully in pre-school activities. They are exceptionally well supported by staff who have a professional, positive and sensitive approach to meeting their needs. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and staff work with parents and outside agencies to ensure that all children develop confidence and make good progress.

Children's behaviour is good as staff effectively support children in sharing and taking turns. A very good range of individual strategies are in place for managing behaviour, for example, a reward chart and stickers. Children have very good relationships with staff and other children. Staff have high expectations and set consistent boundaries for all the children, which helps them learn to negotiate with others and take responsibility for their own behaviour. Children's understanding of right and wrong are developed as they respond to gentle reminders to care for their environment, resources and each other. Staff provide good role models for children by being calm and polite. Praise is given freely to children, ensuring that they develop confidence and self-esteem and understand that they have done well. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents are fully informed about the provision the pre-school offers and how their children are progressing. The excellent quality of displays including lots of positive images of the children and the 'welcome pack' helps parents and children feel welcomed into the pre-school. Helping new children to settle and for parents to talk to staff about any concerns they may have. Parents also receive regular newsletters and notes which keep them up to date with events and activities their children will be participating in. Parents are involved in nursery events such as fundraising for charity. Parents comments and views are always taken seriously as they are incorporated either in activity plans or on children's profiles. The staff have developed a number of ways to extend children's learning in the home, for example, the homework book and children making bird feeders to take home, with a graph to record birds that have seem in their garden. Excellent notices on the information board, displays around the pre-school informs parents about the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage, the 'Birth to three matters' framework and regular meetings are arranged with parents to discuss their child's developmental progress. Consequently, parents are extensively informed about the care and welfare of their child.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by staff who have been checked through the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and who have undergone a recruitment and induction programme. This ensures that all staff working with children are suitable and have relevant training and experience.

Children are provided with a very good level of care, supported and enhanced by the clear policies developed and implemented by the pre-school. These ensure that staff are consistent in their interactions with children and in their regard for safety and security. Documentation,

records and details relating to staff and children are obtained, recorded and stored appropriately, ensuring that the pre-school is meeting legal requirements relating to the National Standards.

The use of available space within the pre-school is effectively organised, with clear designated areas for play, storage, food preparation, changing and eating. These areas are effectively managed by staff to allow children to play, eat and rest safely and securely.

The leadership and management is good. The manager has effectively supported the pre-school during a period of transition and has worked hard to ensure that very good standards are maintained. All staff including the manager and deputy have a very strong teamwork ethos as they show very good commitment to their roles. They are professional and enthusiastic in their approach to providing children with positive early years play experiences and learning. All the staff have a very good understanding of the importance of early childhood development and they work hard to provide good care for all children. The organisation of the daily routines provides children with a very good range of learning experiences fostering children's independence and confidence. Staff have clearly identified roles and responsibilities such as safeguarding, equal opportunities and behaviour management and they carry out their roles to a very high standard. Staff induction and appraisals ensure that new and existing staff feel fully supported and valued in their role. They are deployed successfully within the pre-school and good staffing ratios are maintained throughout the day ensuring children are well supervised and supported during activities. Staff have a very good awareness of the policies and procedures which are in place. Consequently, children are cared for by knowledgeable, experienced staff and they benefit from good continuity of care.

Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the group agreed; to request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment and review and update policies and procedures to meet the revised National Standards and develop the operational plan. (This refers to Standards 2, 7, 10 and 12). Written parental consent for children is now in place and the National Standards have been updated, ensuring the smooth running of the pre-school. Consequently, good improvements have been made with regard to the overall care of the pre-school.

At the last education inspection there were no significant weaknesses to report, but consideration should be given to improving the following: continue to evaluate activities and the use of resources to maintain consistency regarding the quality of nursery education provided at each session and further enhance children's learning experiences. Activities are rigorously evaluated and this information informs future activity plans and resources are consistently used in a purposeful manner, ensuring that children are continuously learning from their play. As a result good improvements have been secured with regards to the nursery education.

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):

- further develop strategies to support gender equality.

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):

- extend further outdoor play activities for children.

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