

# Ratby Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	226456
<b>Inspection date</b>	09 October 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Susan Andrews
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<b>Registered person</b>	Ratby Pre-School
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

Ratby Pre-School is run by a committee of parent volunteers and opened in 1971. It operates from church rooms on Church Lane in the village of Ratby. The group serves the local community and surrounding areas. A maximum of 26 children between the ages of two and five years may attend the pre-school at any one time and the setting provides nursery education to funded three- and four-year-olds. The setting is open on weekdays from 09:15 to 11:45 and from 12:50 to 15:20 during term time. There is a safely enclosed garden area available for outside play.

There are currently 85 children aged two to five years on roll. Of these, 63 children receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school has experience of providing support to children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs 10 staff, of whom six hold appropriate early years qualifications and one staff member is currently working towards a qualification.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in clean and well-maintained premises where they are encouraged to follow good hygiene practices within their daily routines, so helping to minimise risks of cross-infection. For example, they wash their hands with liquid soap after using the toilet and before eating. They show growing awareness of ways to keep themselves healthy and safe, for example, talking about the effects of exercise on their bodies and being careful as they walk so that they do not slip on the sand beneath the sand tray. A good proportion of staff hold current paediatric first aid qualifications. Consequently, there is always a qualified person present and staff are able to act positively should a child become unwell or have an accident whilst in their care. Parental consent to seek emergency medical attention is obtained and accident records are kept, however, in some instances, accident records lack sufficient detail.

Children routinely enjoy spending time in the fresh air through use of a large, enclosed outdoor play area. Here, they participate in a varied range of physical activities helping to promote their large movement skills. For example, children use hockey sticks, hoops, bats, balls and steering wheeled toys, with growing co-ordination. They develop their climbing and balancing skills through use of the fixed pirate ship climbing apparatus and move in different ways in response to action songs and rhymes. Children show growing dexterity when cutting, colouring or using paint brushes, puzzles, and threading toys or when manipulating dough or building with construction toys and train sets.

Children are provided with milk or water at snack times, however, they are not able to independently access drinking water throughout the session. Staff do not routinely encourage children to take additional drinks of water following physical play activities, therefore, children are at risk of becoming dehydrated. Children's allergies are fully addressed and their awareness of healthy foods is encouraged through planned activities and each child brings a healthy food item from home to share at snack time, such as apples, kiwi fruit, sultanas, pears and oranges.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children settle readily on arrival at the setting where low-level pegs in the lobby enable them to store their outdoor clothing safely. Cheerful, quilted radiator covers and displays of children's art work help create a bright and welcoming environment. External doors to the building are kept secure and the outdoor play area is fully fenced, so ensuring children cannot leave the premises unsupervised and therefore remain safe.

The pre-school's furnishings and equipment are in good condition, reflect diversity and are appropriate to children's stage of development, for example, chairs and tables are of child height, and a large carpeted area is provided for children to engage in floor activities, such as playing with the train set. Effective arrangements are in place to maintain children's safety. For example, good staff deployment and adult to child ratios are maintained throughout the sessions, exposed electrical sockets are fitted with covers and hot radiators are protected. Risk assessments are conducted and written procedures are in place to be followed in the event of emergencies, such as a fire or a child going missing. Staff are sufficiently familiar with these to enable them to act appropriately in such circumstances.

Staff are aware of the signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect. They recognise their responsibility to protect the children in their care and display a copy of the 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' government leaflet on the notice board in the lobby. Staff are familiar with reporting procedures and of their duty to follow up any child protection concerns in accordance with agreed national and local procedures. Consequently, they are able to safeguard children's welfare effectively.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children settle quickly in the friendly and welcoming environment. They are usually busy and occupied in their play and are confident in their relationships with their peers, readily approaching adults to talk about their needs and interests and beginning to play sociably with others. For example, in simple pretend play as they 'swim to safety away from the sharks onto the pirate ship'. Good staff ratios enable staff to spend time actively involved with children, listening and talking to them, so helping them to feel recognised and valued as individuals. Staff are familiar with use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to support their planning and provision for younger children's development and learning.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning for the funded nursery education programme is good. Staff are sufficiently familiar with the 'Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage' to enable them to plan a topic-based programme of activities giving generally broad and balanced coverage across all areas of learning. They make good use of external sources of advice and training to enable them to effectively support children with identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Observations of individual children's activities and stage of development help staff track individual children's overall progress, through the stepping stones, towards the early learning goals. These assessments are used to inform short-term planning to ensure that activities offer consistently high levels of challenge, independence and progression, particularly for older and more able children. Staff work well together as a team to ensure that sessions run smoothly and that time is used well to provide a balance of adult-led activities, such as circle time where children bring things from home to 'show and tell'. There are frequent opportunities for child-chosen activities where they spontaneously play individually or in small groups. Resources and play materials are of good quality and generally suited to children's interests and stage of maturity.

High priority is given to promoting children's social and emotional development. Children know they are recognised and valued as individuals because staff listen carefully to them and encourage them to share their ideas and experiences with others, for example, as they sit sociably together as they are welcomed and given time to share their news at register and circle time. Staff use a number of effective methods to help children understand what is expected of them, for example, being consistent and using discussion to encourage children to think about sharing and turn taking. Children are encouraged to become aware of their own and others' feelings, for example, as they share books and stories about different life experiences.

Children's communication skills are generally developing well. They show great interest and enjoyment in well-told stories in a structured group setting, ably predicting what will happen next, for example, in the familiar story about 'Ten in the bed'. Children also come together to share books with each other in the book corner. This includes simple factual books as well as stories, so helping children to understand that words have meaning. The good range of books

support their learning about different topics, such as harvest, numbers and counting. Children readily talk about recent events and experiences in a group, for instance, the 'harvest festival service' at the nearby church and 'going to the dentist'. They frequently enjoy a varied range of mark-making activities as they use crayons, pencils, paints and draw letters and numbers in the sand with their fingers. In addition they are actively encouraged to develop their own purposeful writing, for example, by trying to write their own name on their art work.

Children develop a growing awareness of shape and size, for example, as they build with commercial construction sets or make paper collages. They use a selection of resources enabling them to begin to develop some awareness of repeating patterns, such as when they thread different coloured beads onto laces. Children often use number names in their play, sometimes reliably counting up to 10, for example, when sorting out coloured threading beads or differently shaped plastic bricks. They are familiar with the idea that numbers have significance as they count the numbers of children lining up at the door or when they subtract numbers as they sing songs, such as 'five little speckled frogs' and 'there were 10 in the bed and the little one said roll over'.

A variety of topic-based activities help support children's knowledge and understanding of the world. They learn about their local community through visits to local the church at harvest festival time, taking food for gifts for the elderly, or when visiting the nearby school. They make comparisons with the wider world as they celebrate and recognise some multicultural festivals such as Chinese New Year and Diwali. Children begin to design and build in different ways through creative art and as they link together sections of the train track. They show interest in varied aspects of technology, such as using simple computer programmes using the mouse and keyboard with increasing competency. They show excitement, interest and learn about various aspects of the natural world, for example, when they look at the changing colour of the autumn leaves, as they plant and grow sunflowers, or when they explore the shiny, hard, outer texture of conkers.

Adult-led activities introduce children to a variety of creative materials and techniques, such as collage, play dough and junk modelling, so introducing them to different aspects of colour, shape and form. They enjoy exploring their own creative ideas as they freely draw or make play dough shapes. They show familiarity with a varied range of songs, and often spontaneously sing as they play. They use percussion instruments, such as tambourines, drums, bells and shakers to tap out different rhythms and respond to music of different types through movement.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children are helped to develop confidence and a sense of belonging in this welcoming setting, for example, as children and staff greet each other by name. Staff make effective use of positive role models and explanation to help children understand what behaviour is expected of them. For example, they always say 'please' and 'thank' you to the children and expect them to do the same in return, to take turns and to listen to each other attentively at 'show and tell' time. Staff encourage children to take some responsibility for their surroundings, for example, by helping to tidy away the toys. Children begin to learn how to manage their own behaviour because staff are calm and consistent in dealing with conflict, acknowledging children's feelings and encouraging them to negotiate and take turns.

The pre-school takes active steps to support children's individual learning needs. Children routinely enjoy using a good selection of books, toys and equipment such as dolls, puzzles,

posters, dressing up clothes but reflect disability, and different cultures and lifestyles. They participate in events to mark different religions and festivals such as Diwali, Chinese New Year or Easter, so helping them recognise and respect diversity. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents speak favourably about staff's caring and committed approach which helps them feel confident in the care offered to their children. A good range of documentation is made readily available to parents, at the time they place their child at the setting, which includes aspects of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and of the Foundation Stage, so helping to promote an understanding of the provision for children's development and learning. Opportunities for parents to contribute more fully to their children's care and learning through the use of questionnaires, suggestion boxes and parents evenings are not established. However, updated information is displayed on the parents' notice board giving details of current topics and activities and this enables parents to make links with their children's learning at home.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are happy and settled in this friendly and caring pre-school. Good staff ratios enable staff to work closely with children and know them as individuals. The established staff team work well together to create a calm and well-organised environment, so helping children to benefit from continuity of care and to understand what is expected of them. Identified recruitment and clearance procedures are in place to ensure that any new staff recruited are suitable to work with children. Current staff show continued commitment to the ongoing use of available local training to update their awareness of current issues and ways to support children's needs, for example, by attending first aid and anti-bias training workshops.

Comprehensive policies and procedures are readily accessible and methodically organised. Staff have a good awareness of how to implement these to underpin children's care and welfare, for example, with regard to their child protection responsibilities or positive ways to manage children's behaviour. Necessary records, such as children's contact and health details, are collated and regularly updated, so ensuring that effective information is readily accessible to support arrangements for children's care.

The leadership and management of the funded nursery education programme is good. Systems are in place to ensure that there is close involvement between the elected pre-school committee and childcare staff. In addition to ongoing informal discussion, staff meet frequently to evaluate arrangements and activities and to contribute to future planning and the revision of policies and procedures. Good links with local authority early years development workers and the commitment by staff to embrace further training, enables them to review practice at regular intervals and identify ways to develop the services offered to children and their parents. Overall children's needs are met.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the pre-school agreed to ensure that all staff are familiar with the procedures for lost children. The setting has taken positive steps to address this issue. A written lost or uncollected child policy is in place, and staff are fully aware of the appropriate procedures to be followed if this situation should occur.

## 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 accident records contain sufficient detail
- continue to develop a partnership with parents and carers that encourage them to participate and contribute more effectively to their child's care and learning.

### 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):

- promote opportunities for children to develop their self-care skills, for example, by freely accessing drinking water during the session, pouring their own drinks at snack time, independently dealing with their own toileting and personal hygiene needs and putting on their coats at home time.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)