

# Rainbow Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	508748
<b>Inspection date</b>	19 November 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Sarah Johnson
<b>Setting Address</b>	Chelmer Village Hall, Chelmer Village, CHELMSFORD, Essex, CM2 6RF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01245 467193
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<b>Registered person</b>	The Trustees of Rainbow 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?

Rainbow Pre-school opened in 1982. It is a registered charity and is managed by a voluntary management committee, made up of parents of children at the pre-school. It operates from a large hall within Chelmer Village Hall in Chelmsford. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:20 to 11:55 and 12:25 to 15:00, during school term times only. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 64 children from two to five years on roll. Of these, 40 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area and attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and a number of children who have English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs 10 members of staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications and two members of staff are working towards a qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

Children are kept healthy at the setting and are developing an awareness of good hygiene practice as they follow good procedures and routines for health and hygiene. Hand washing is an integral part of the daily routine as staff consistently remind children to wash their hands after using the toilet and children are encouraged to line up to wash their hands before snack. Although the children use individual paper towels and liquid soap when visiting the toilet, the risk of cross-infection is not sufficiently minimised when children wash their hands before snack. For example, children wash their hands in bowls that are not refilled with clean water at frequent intervals and only a limited amount of liquid soap is dispensed into the water for all children to share. Children's understanding of the importance of personal hygiene is supported by displays of meaningful photographs which show the children washing their hands and using tissues to wipe their noses. Children are kept safe from infection and illness as there is a clear policy in place for the exclusion of children who are unwell, which is shared with parents. Three members of staff have completed training in administering appropriate first aid treatment to young children and a well-stocked first aid box is available, helping to ensure children's health is promoted in the event of a medical emergency. Clear records are maintained regarding accidents and there is an effective procedure for obtaining consent from parents and recording any medication administered to children whilst at the setting.

Children sit together in small groups to share healthy and nutritious mid-morning and mid-afternoon snacks including cheese and crackers, raisins and pieces of fresh fruit. Although children are offered a choice of milk or water to drink at snack time, fresh drinking water is not readily available throughout the session and consequently children's ability to remain well-hydrated is potentially compromised. Children's individual dietary needs are met as all staff are aware of any allergies they may have and accommodate these effectively.

Children have regular opportunities to enjoy physical activity in the fresh air as they access the safe and secure outside area when the weather is dry. In addition, they have good opportunities to develop physical skills such as balance and coordination as they play with a good range of indoor equipment. For example, they practise their climbing skills on a small apparatus, crawl through tunnels, jump on the mini trampoline and show control when moving their arms to keep a ball on the large parachute.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure physical environment, where staff are effective in creating a welcoming and child-friendly atmosphere. Display boards are placed around the main playroom displaying attractive pictures, posters and photographs which brighten up the room and add interest for the children. The children play in a spacious hall that is organised effectively to enable them to move around freely and access well-spaced activities. Children are engaged as they play with a wide range of resources that are stimulating and provide appropriate levels of challenge for all children. Most resources are stored at a low accessible level, promoting children's independence and enabling them to reach toys and sit comfortably to join in. Children confidently request additional resources from the separate storage cupboard, which enables them to follow their interests and take the lead in their own play. There are sufficient numbers

of appropriately sized chairs and tables to allow flexible arrangements for children to play and eat together.

Staff are motivated in providing a safe environment for children, as they conduct daily risk assessments and take positive steps to address any hazards identified during these checks. Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own safety when staff remind them that they may fall over if they run in the playroom and show them how to handle scissors safely. There are effective systems in place to ensure the safe arrival and collection of children. For example, thorough monitoring of the entrance doors by staff ensures that children are unable to leave the premises unseen and only with those who are authorised to collect them. Children are protected further as the identity of visitors is checked before they are allowed to enter the setting and they are asked to sign in and out of the visitor book. Children are protected from the risk of fire as good fire safety precautions are in place such as regular fire drills practised with the children and routine testing of the fire extinguishers and smoke alarms.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because the manager has completed training in safeguarding children and is named as the designated person for ensuring children's welfare is given priority. The staff are supported by a well-written policy for child protection and as a result, all staff are aware of the signs of possible abuse and know the correct procedure to follow if they have any concerns.

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

The provision is good.

Children arrive happy as they warmly greet the staff at the beginning of the session. They are clearly settled by the familiar routine as they find their names to self-register and confidently join their friends who are sitting ready for the short daily group registration. Staff are interested in what children say and do and are consistently down at the children's level interacting with them and getting involved in their play. For example, staff respond with enthusiasm when children approach them to ask them if they would like to visit their travel agent to book a holiday. Activities such as role play effectively promote children's imaginative skills. For example, the large themed role play area is popular with the children as they use realistic props and dressing up clothes to support their play. Children are supported well to give them the confidence to try new things. For example, staff sensitively encourage children to sit under the parachute by offering to join them. Children demonstrate their caring relationships with the staff as they spontaneously give them a hug when leaving at the end of the session.

Staff use their sound knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to incorporate the needs of younger children within the planning of activities. A secure settling in policy ensures that younger children are supported to deal with separation from their parents and as a result they settle quickly and their parents feel reassured.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge and effective implementation of the principles of the Foundation Stage and clearly understand how children learn and develop. Children benefit as staff are proactive in continuing their professional development and are willing to trial new ideas to build on the delivery of the curriculum. Effective planning and rotation of resources ensures that children are engaged in a broad range of activities covering all six areas of learning. Children enjoy activities based around interesting weekly themes such as 'occupations', 'fairy tales' and 'when I grow up'. Their progress towards

the early learning goals is facilitated, as learning intentions are identified in the planning and there are clear links to the stepping stones. Assessments files for individual children include ongoing short observations of children's progress and photographs of what they can do. These are used well to inform the next steps in their learning and, as a result, individual children are supported to move on and make steady progress.

Appropriate teaching methods are used to help children to consolidate and extend their learning. For example, staff use open-ended questioning to encourage discussion about trees and leaves when children are drawing an Autumn picture. Staff support children's behaviour very well to ensure an effective learning environment. For example, children learn to follow clear boundaries as they take a number card when they wish to use the computer and are reminded to put their hands up when they wish to speak during group story sessions. Children's learning is supported as staff put time, resources and the accommodation to good use. For example, staff offer meaningful learning experiences when they arrange for a local police officer to visit the pre-school.

Children demonstrate confidence when linking up with others for support. They confidently approach staff to ask for help to put on aprons or to print their work from the computer. Children play well together and have obvious friendships with others. They take turns and show good negotiation skills as they work in pairs to complete jigsaws together. Children show care and concern for others as they stop to help their friends to pick up the coins they have dropped on the floor and are concerned when their friends are upset. Good opportunities are offered for children to develop their social skills as they visit the local primary school and spend time meeting new children. Children are developing their competencies in speaking, listening, reading and writing. They confidently recognise their own names in print when self-registering and some children attempt to write their name onto their creative work with support from the staff. Children are beginning to write for a purpose as they write the address on envelopes and post these in the pre-school post box. They show developing pencil control when drawing large circles to fill a piece of paper and drawing freely with chalk on the large chalkboard. During show and tell sessions, children stand up in front of the group and talk confidently about objects they have brought in from home such as a model aeroplane. They listen well, asking questions to find out more and contributing stories from their own experiences.

Children are learning about connections and relationships in numbers as they make sets of familiar objects on the computer and label these with the corresponding numerals. They talk about adding one more object and decide which set has more or less objects. Children count confidently as staff make the most of incidental opportunities to encourage this. For example, children count the number of children and staff present during registration. However, opportunities for children to explore and talk about space, shape and measures are more limited as spontaneous opportunities to extend children's understanding of these mathematical concepts are often missed. Children enjoy being creative and expressing their own ideas and thoughts through art, music, dance and imaginative play. They use realistic resources to support their role play such as travel brochures, train tickets and coins. When playing with small world characters in a garage, the children introduce imaginative storylines and narrative into their play. Children spend significant time putting together a collage of shapes and sticky foam animals, deciding precisely where best to place each piece. Children enjoy regular times where they join together as a whole group to sing rhymes and follow actions. For example, they listen to music as they move like 'funky monkeys' and march to the beat of the music.

Children are making sense of the world around them by investigating and exploring through first hand experiences in an interesting environment. They investigate aspects of the living

world as they enjoy a woodland walk and look closely at ladybirds on a piece of bark. Children show interest and ask questions to find out more when a parent brings in his motor bike for children to look at and sit on. They confidently use a good range of technology and programmable toys in their play such as mobile phones, cash registers, calculators and a computer. They learn about the uses of everyday technology further as staff support them to use a sewing machine safely. Children enjoy a wide range of physical activities which help them to develop their skills when using small apparatus, tools and equipment. They use scissors to cut shapes from pieces of paper and use hammers to tap nails into pieces of wood. They demonstrate increasing control as they carefully thread elastic through dried pasta tubes to make a necklace and persevere with the tricky task of peeling the backing off sticky shapes.

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

The provision is good.

Children feel valued as their individuality is celebrated and they are fully included in all aspects of the setting. Staff and children enjoy the time they share together and staff take time to get to know them and their parents well. Children develop a good sense of belonging as they talk enthusiastically about their parents coming to watch them at the Christmas performance and pose proudly to have their photographs taken. Children are learning to value diversity and are developing an understanding of the wider community. For example, they use resources such as books and posters reflecting people from cultures other than their own. Staff are motivated in providing good support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and they work in partnership with parents and other professionals to ensure children's individual needs are met. For example, the staff work with a Special Educational Needs Coordinator from the local authority who visits the setting to offer guidance. Staff have completed relevant training in aspects such as inclusion, writing individual education plans and the code of practice. This ongoing training provides staff with the knowledge and understanding to effectively monitor and assess children's individual needs.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children play well together and on their own. They are learning to share resources and take turns in group games, indicating that they understand their role in relationships and are considerate of others. There is a clearly written policy for behaviour, which fully reflects the range of positive strategies used by staff to support children's behaviour. For example, staff skilfully use distraction techniques to diffuse unsettled behaviour such as encouraging children to march like soldiers when walking back to the playroom. Children are learning clear boundaries as staff consistently offer them praise for being kind and helpful to others. They experience meaningful opportunities to learn about cultures other than their own. They celebrate festivals such as Chinese new year, when they look at traditional resources on an interest table including chopsticks and dragons and make Chinese lanterns.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Initially, parents are given an informative prospectus which provides full details of how the setting operates and also a detailed overview of each of the areas of learning in the Foundation Stage. Regular newsletters include further information, including a list of the themes to be covered over a half term period. The newsletters also provide ideas to encourage parents to contribute to their children's learning such as suggestions of items to bring in from home. Staff are very approachable and welcome parent's contributions to their children's assessment records during regular meetings with their child's key person. Parents are kept up-to-date with their children's progress. For example, staff encourage children to share their learning experiences with their parents at the end of the session and photographs of children taken during activities are displayed in the foyer. Important information is gathered

about what children can do in order for staff to ascertain their starting points in learning. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in the setting by serving on the management committee and signing up to volunteer during sessions.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by experienced and qualified staff with a sound knowledge and understanding of child development. Children are safeguarded by secure recruitment and vetting procedures which are in place to ensure that children are never left alone with people who have not been suitably vetted. Sessions are organised well with a clear daily routine which helps children to settle and become confident. For example, children understand that it is time for snack or tidying up when they hear the sound of the bell. Children benefit from good levels of supervision and individual attention from staff as the adult to child ratios often exceed minimum requirements and staff dedicate a majority of their time working directly with the children. Staff deployment is organised effectively as all staff are clear on their roles after referring to a rota of tasks. These tasks are rotated weekly to ensure staff have the opportunity to experience all aspects of the setting and tasks can be easily delegated to accommodate staff absence.

The operational plan is very well organised and includes a clear set of written policies and procedures which are updated regularly and work well in practice to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution. All the required documentation and consents are in place and stored securely to ensure children are cared for in line with their parent's wishes.

The leadership and management is good. Staff share a clear vision for providing good quality nursery education and work effectively as a cohesive team. The manager is a positive role model which helps the staff team to feel valued and motivated in offering children good learning opportunities and fostering their progress whilst at the setting. All staff are involved in contributing to the planning, ensuring that the evaluation of nursery education is effective and children experience consistency in the care and education that they receive. Staff show a commitment to continuous improvement and are proactive in following any advice and guidance they receive from advisors at the local authority. This ensures that the curriculum offered remains effective in promoting children's learning. Staff appraisals are conducted to identify the strengths and areas for professional development for each member of staff. The manager strikes a good balance between supporting staff to undertake relevant training and ensuring staffing levels continue to be appropriate.

Overall children's needs are met.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection the provider was asked to enable parents to be more closely involved with monitoring and recording their child's progress and achievements. Effective systems are now in place to ensure parents have good opportunities to contribute information about their children's progress at home, such as regular opportunities to meet with their child's key person. The provider was also asked to review the effectiveness of the settling-in procedure to enable children to be more fully supported when starting the group. The settling-in procedure has been reviewed and now offers increased flexibility to ensure children are supported to settle

into the setting at their own pace and with sensitive support from staff. As a result, they settle well and their parents feel reassured that their children's needs are being met.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider was asked to: improve the effectiveness of whole group times to support or extend children's learning according to their stage of development or understanding; provide more challenge and extension for more-able children during pre-school sessions and increase the detail in planning for the focused activities, to ensure teaching methods follow the principles of the Foundation Stage and learning outcomes are more pertinent to the gaps in children's learning. The setting offers daily opportunities for whole group stories and rhymes, during which children are encouraged to ask questions to find out more about books and to share their experiences with their friends. As a result, they generally remain engaged and their learning is extended during these times. Similarly, staff use open-ended questioning and opportunities for spontaneous discussion to ensure more-able children are challenged by the activities they undertake whilst at the pre-school. The planning process gives regard to the gaps in individual children's learning and the staff have reviewed the way in which they record this to ensure it is clearly evident in the short term planning of activities. As a result, staff have a clear understanding of their role in supporting individual children to progress and children continue to move on to the next steps in their learning.

### **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 fresh drinking water is available at all times
- review hand washing procedures to ensure the risk of cross-infection to children is minimised.

#### **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):



- increase the spontaneous use of mathematical language to maximise children's understanding of concepts such as space, shapes and measures.

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)