

Rainbow Little Waltham

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY279472
Inspection date	13 December 2007
Inspector	Karen Pretty
Setting Address	Tufnell Hall, The Street Little Waltham, Chelmsford, Essex, CM3 3NY
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Registered person	Rainbow Little Waltham 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 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 Little Waltham opened in 2004. The group is situated in the village on the outskirts of Chelmsford, Essex. The group operates from a large hall within a sports and social club which also includes cloakroom facilities, kitchen and storage room. A maximum of 20 children may attend the group at any one time. The group is open each weekday from 09:00 to 15:30 during term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area and can also use the large playing field.

There are currently 39 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 26 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local and surrounding areas. The group currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The group employs eight members of staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications. The group reflects the Montessori ethos and methods. Two members of the staff have attended relevant Montessori training. The group receives support from the local authority and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn to follow good health and hygiene practices from an early age through the well established routines throughout the session. For example, they know to wash their hands before snack time and staff positively reinforce the need to wash away any germs. However, children wash their hands in the same water as it is not changed between each child. Consequently, putting them at risk of cross-infection. Children receive appropriate care if they are ill or have an accident because staff are aware of children's individual health care needs and all the required documentation and consents are in place to support this. In addition, staff attend first aid training to ensure they are aware of the correct procedures to follow in the event of a medical emergency. Any accidents are logged and signed by parents on collection.

Children's dietary needs are well met through the provision of healthy snacks that take account of their individual dietary requirements and preferences. The organisation of snack time enables children begin to take some responsibility for their own needs as they choose what to have from the bowl in the middle of the table and the plate which is taken around by staff. Snacks consistently features fresh fruit and vegetables and children also enjoy warm toast. Some children pour their own drinks and all children are given a choice between milk and water. Healthy eating is consistently reinforced during discussions between staff and children at snack time. A water jug and cups are available on a low-level table with chairs throughout the rest of the session which children independently access ensuring they remain well hydrated.

Children enjoy a broad range of physical play experiences that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They have regular opportunities to develop a positive attitude towards physical play both indoors and outdoors. Children have access to a wide range of physical play equipment and develop skills such as running, balancing, jumping and crawling. They demonstrate increasing control while using equipment such as scissors, completing puzzles, using Montessori practical life resources and a variety of mark-making tools to help them develop their hand to eye coordination. Fold out mattresses, with fresh individual linen are used to enable children to rest and sleep according to their individual needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, welcoming and cosy environment that is very safe. The organisation of space is effective and creative with attractive and colourful displays and photographs on the walls. A wide range of stimulating resources are stored at a low-level which promotes children's independence and confidence. These provide a balanced range of activities that are interactive and promote children's learning in all areas. Toys and equipment for younger children are vibrant and stimulating, providing a wide range of sensory experiences. Daily toy checks ensure that all equipment is clean and well maintained. Thorough and consistent procedures ensure that any hazards to children are effectively minimised.

The premises are kept secure and staff manage arrival and collection times safely using careful systems to ensure children's safety. Detailed and clear operational procedures for outings and emergencies are well planned and documented. Regular fire drills that are evaluated and documented ensure that staff and children know what to do in the event of a fire. Fire prevention equipment is regularly checked and recommendations are met. Children are kept safe on regular

outings with good adult to child ratios and forward planning. Before walking to the local school to attend the Christmas concert, simple explanations were given about holding hands and staying together. Written consents are obtained from parents for all outings where staff are careful to ensure that venues are safe and suitable.

Children are well protected from harm by knowledgeable and dedicated staff who have attended child protection training. Informative and relevant information is clearly displayed in order that correct procedures are followed in the event of a concern. Children are protected well by effective policies and caring responsible staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Most children settle well and others are supported by staff to do so in the welcoming and child-friendly environment. Children having difficulty leaving their parents are comforted and reassured by staff who acknowledge their feelings while offering toys to distract and interest them to help them settle. Children respond well to staff who spend their time supporting and interacting with children's play to extend their learning. For example, a member of staff sat with a child during a Christmas card activity and offered open-ended questions about 'how many' and 'what colour'. Children play happily together in small groups or on their own, they are able to initiate their own play as they can self-select from child-friendly accessible storage to follow their own interests.

Staff take account of 'Birth to three matters' in their plans to ensure children are provided with a balanced range of activities. For example, children move small cars around the different levels of the garage together to promote their social development. Access to the extensive range of stimulating resources within the room ensures children are fully involved and motivated throughout the session. For example, a low-level table for drawing gives children good opportunities to practise their mark-making skills and a quiet area provides opportunities to 'snuggle in' and relax.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff use their competent understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn to provide a broad range of activities balanced across the six areas of learning. The planning identifies appropriate activities and learning intentions based on appropriate stepping stones. Regular evaluation takes place each day to identify the children's learning and note interests to take forward. Focussed activities are planned each week. However, these are currently mainly based around art and craft activities and need improving to ensure they consistently evaluate the learning intention. Staff effectively use a good variety of teaching methods to help children make progress and adapt their questioning skills to take account of individual children's level of understanding and interest.

Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff give children enthusiastic explanations of what is planned each day and follow routines which the children are familiar with to encourage their participation, for example, when it is time to tidy up children are notified in advance and all become happily involved. Children's progress through the stepping stones is monitored in their individual records of progress. However, these are not used to identify the next steps in their learning and inform future planning. Staff provide children with a welcoming environment which reflects children's backgrounds and the wider community.

Children enjoy their time at the group and have a positive attitude to learning. They are very confident and self-assured to work and play independently or in small groups. Children understand the rules of the group, for example, they remind each other that it is important to 'share' and 'take turns' during a cooking activity. Staff encourage them to develop self-care skills when putting on and hanging up their coats before going outside and after coming in.

Children are successful and confident communicators and are very eager to join in with activities, for example, when playing in the home corner children talk freely to relive their individual life experiences. For one afternoon each week children can join in French lessons to extend their vocabulary and learn simple words relating to the weekly theme in another language. Children have opportunities to recognise their own names on their individual work trays and enjoy using mark-making resources at the table and in the role play area to encourage their understanding of writing for a purpose. Children listen and respond to stories at circle time, promoting their enjoyment of an increasing range of books.

Most children can count confidently to ten and they take part in some planned and spontaneous activities to develop these skills. They enjoy joining in with number rhymes and staff encourage them to work out 'how many are left' during 10 fat sausages, which more-able children confidently do. Regular opportunities for sand and water play enable children to experiment independently with simple capacity calculations. Children have good opportunities to use and recognise numerals and this regularly features in their plans.

Children enjoy operating a balanced range of resources in the home corner to stimulate their interest in everyday technology such as telephones and a till. The nursery has a computer and the children freely and effectively access it on a daily basis. Children have opportunities to explore and investigate different malleable materials during everyday play and through planned cooking activities. Life cycle puzzles help children develop an awareness of change and growth. They enjoy using construction sets and equipment such as scissors and play dough tools to develop their hand to eye coordination.

Children engage in imaginative role play activities based on their own first-hand experiences in the well-resourced role play area. Staff plan a range of role play situations such as a police station or doctor's surgery to extend their ideas. Children join in enthusiastically with their favourite songs and action rhymes. Weekly dance and 'Jo Jingles' sessions take place to further develop their love of music and movement. Children explore colour at the painting easels and also take part in planned, adult-led craft activities, which give children access to a range of media and resources of their own choosing to allow them to experiment and explore their own ideas and creativity. Overall, children make good progress in their learning and achieve well given their capability and starting points.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children in this provision are valued and have an good sense of belonging. High adult to child ratios ensure that children's individual needs are consistently met. Staff actively seek information about children's backgrounds in order to best meet their individual needs. Different sized groups encourage children to socialise and build relationships with each other. Children learn about other cultures and beliefs through exciting experiences where they are encouraged to express their individual ideas. They learn about different customs and cultures through topics where fun and inventive activities provide meaningful experiences through which the children

enthusiastically learn, they recently experienced drawing and scooping out pumpkins during Halloween. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The group has a very positive approach to supporting children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The manager has a strong commitment to equality of opportunity for all children. The designated member of staff has attended a good range of modular training and actively researches information to enable her to tailor support to individual children and families. Effective policies underpin practice and provide specific guidelines for children with additional needs and the behavioural expectations within the group. Children's behaviour is good throughout the session. Staff provide children with strong positive role models. They are calm, consistent and polite, reinforcing good behaviour very positively such as when children happily wait for a turn to mix the cooking ingredients. Regular training opportunities enable staff to use effective strategies and have an in-depth understanding of how children develop and behave. There are a few very minor incidents which are dealt with sensitively and skilfully.

Parents receive good, accurate information about the running of the provision and are kept up-to-date with any changes through regular newsletters and via notice boards. A welcome brochure is full of useful information to help parents understand the ethos of the group. The operational plan is readily available each session and good systems are in place to encourage parents to look inside. Their views are sought and acted upon via questionnaires with emphasis on their opinions regarding care and education. Effective settling-in procedures and the daily exchange of information between parents and staff ensures children's changing needs are met and provides continuity of care. An up-to-date complaints policy ensures parents are fully aware how to make their concerns known and provides them with the necessary information to contact the regulator should they need to.

The partnership with parents and carers of children receiving nursery education is good. Parents receive full information about the Foundation Stage in the setting's prospectus. They are informed about the weekly plans through notices which are displayed in the entrance. Further information about long and medium term planning is provided through the regular and informative newsletters they receive. Parents can view their child's achievement records at any time, however, there is no formal system for parents to regularly access these and make ongoing contributions. Parents make positive comments on how well their children have developed at the provision and appreciate the communication and commitment of the staff. Therefore, children's learning is enhanced through a good working partnership.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from the very effective organisation of the group, which ensures children's health, safety and well-being are assured. Staff are qualified and committed to ongoing training. This means they readily implement any new initiatives and are proactive in moving their practice forward. Adults are deployed very well and provide good support for the children, which promotes their care and learning. Children are well protected because the recruitment and checking procedures are thorough and ensure staff are suitable to be in contact with children. All policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and implemented in practice to promote good outcomes for all children. A register of children's and staff attendance is maintained on a daily basis, however, it does not record staff actual hours of arrival and departure. Documentation is well-organised and maintained so that regulatory requirements are met.

The leadership and management of nursery education is good. The manager fully supports staff and their role in providing care and education for children. The established staff team are highly motivated and committed to the raising and monitoring of achievement for all children. They work well together and constantly review their practice through ongoing evaluations and informal team meetings. The manager is proactive in acknowledging areas for improvement to nursery education and is working closely with staff and the local authority advisory teacher to ensure they continue to develop these areas such as preparing for the introduction of the Early Years Foundation Stage and updating planning and observation documentation. Parents' opinions are valued and consequently children benefit from everyone's commitment to their learning and development.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following their last care inspection the group was required to: ensure children have constant access to fresh drinking water; develop and implement a procedure for lost or uncollected children. Both of these recommendations were acted upon. Children now have constant and independent access to fresh drinking water throughout the whole session ensuring children remain healthy and well hydrated. Effective written policies are in place outlining to procedures to be followed should a child become lost or is uncollected, therefore, children's safety is fully promoted.

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):

- improve hand washing procedures for children to reduce the risk of cross-infection
- ensure an accurate record is maintained of staff actual hours of attendance on a daily basis.

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 develop the assessment and evaluation of children's progress to identify next steps in their learning and to inform future planning
- extend the use of adult focussed activities and ensure they consistently evaluate the defined learning intention
- devise and implement a system for parents to access their children's developmental records and make ongoing contributions.

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