

# The Rocking Horse Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	136100
<b>Inspection date</b>	02 October 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Kay Roberts
<b>Setting Address</b>	c/o The Grange School, Tower Road North, Bristol, BS30 8XQ
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<b>Registered person</b>	Julia Davies
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](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?

The Rocking Horse Day Nursery opened in February 1992 and is independently situated within the premises of the Grange School, in Warmley. The proprietor also owns another nursery which is situated in Bristol. The nursery serves the local area and is open five days a week, except for bank holidays. Sessions are from 07.30 to 18.00. Children attending are grouped into five areas according to their age and stages of development. Registration is for a maximum of 57 children from six months to five years. There are currently 76 children on roll and this includes 32 funded three year olds. The nursery supports children with physical disabilities. There are ten staff working directly with children, all of whom have early years qualifications. The setting receives support from a teacher advisor from South Gloucestershire Council.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is suitably promoted. They play in a clean environment, although less attention has been given to the room for pre-school children. Children learn the importance of hygiene through the daily routine as they brush their teeth after lunch. Children just over a year are independent in reaching the wash hand basins and are given the time to wash their own hands before staff intervene to ensure they are thorough. Pre-school children understand that they must wash their hands, otherwise they will get 'a bad tummy because of germs'. The importance of being thorough is reinforced as they place their hands under the ultra-violet light of the hand washing machine to show which areas are dirty. The risk of infection is reduced as the policy for excluding children who are sick is shared with parents. Staff, particularly those caring for babies, follow hygienic procedures, for example providing individual bedding and wiping tables before children eat. There are good procedures in place for managing both accidents and medication so that children's welfare is promoted.

When thirsty, children take a drink from their clearly distinguishable water bottles. Although water bottles are cleaned on a daily basis, on occasions the lids are not closed down so there may be a risk of infection. Parents are aware of what children eat as they were consulted about the healthy, varied menu which is displayed. Children do not eat processed foods as all meals are cooked on the premises from fresh. Meal and snack times are a social occasion as children chat about members of their family. From the age of two years children are independent as they pour their own drinks and help to prepare the fruit for snack. At lunch time they give out the cutlery and carry plates of food from the trolley to their friends. Children are encouraged to eat as staff provide an example. Children do not go hungry as they can eat as much as they want. Pre-school children are beginning to understand about healthy eating and explain that milk is good for their teeth, but that sweets should only be eaten as a treat. Babies are emotionally secure as they snuggle into their key worker, who quietly chats as they have their bottle of milk.

Children have daily opportunities to play in the fresh air and are protected from the elements. In summer sun screen is applied and children wear hats, the importance of which is reinforced as staff wear hats. When it is wet children wear coats and wellington boots so that they can have fun splashing in puddles. Children develop large muscle skills as they run around pretending to be 'Power Rangers'. They use co-ordination as they kick a large ball. Other children dig in the sand and when they have made a sand castle, proud of their success, they ask their friends to look. As staff have undertaken forestry training some resources are linked to this and include den making materials and a holistic play box. Young babies also go outdoors and are able to watch the other children at play, or alternatively go out in the local community; to the post office, Grimsby Farm or watch the stream. Indoors children continue to exercise as they stretch high and wide as they participate in music and movement. Babies are provided with space to crawl so they develop strength in their legs. Toddlers move themselves backwards and forwards on a small rocking horse as they listen to a member of staff sing 'Row, row, row your boat'. Older children begin to understand how their bodies respond to exercise as they feel their heartbeat when resting and after exercise. They understand that after exercise they need to rest and take a drink. Babies do not get over tired as staff follow their home routine for sleep and they are able to rest peacefully in a room away from their peers. As children get older they quickly fall asleep after lunch, as the staff gently stroke their backs whilst they listen to music playing quietly in the background.

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

The provision is good.

Children play in a secure environment so they can not leave unnoticed. There are good systems in place so that children are protected from people not vetted and are only released to authorised adults. In the event of a fire children are protected as there is suitable equipment in place and details of the fire drill are fully recorded. The risk of children having an accident is very low as staff use suitable equipment, such as, safety gates. There is a risk assessment in place which is updated each time there is a new piece of equipment or the monthly review of accident records identifies a common theme. Staff are vigilant; when babies get on and off the rocking horse, they are able to hold onto an adult's hand. Outdoors staff advise children that they must hold onto the side of the wet wooden slope and go carefully. Children begin to understand how to protect themselves. They explain that they must not wave scissors in the air, and that when they have finished using them the scissors must be closed and placed on the table. Children also realise that they must be careful on a road or they may get knocked down. Children are further protected as staff have a good knowledge and understanding of local safeguarding procedures.

Children play in a welcoming environment with a mass of children's work, photographs and learning stories displayed throughout the premises. Music plays quietly in the background in the rooms occupied by children under two years. Each room is organised so that activities are placed in specific areas with space in between each, so that children move around freely and those engaged in play are not disturbed by peers. There is space for relaxation, play and a soft play room for physical exercise. Babies also benefit from having a separate sleep room which incorporates a small kitchen area for the preparation of milk. There is also a separate room for staff wishing to work with a small group of children or on an individual basis, so they are not distracted by their peers. Outside there are two separate areas so that younger children remain safe. There is a patio area for riding bikes, a grassed area with trees and children are able to walk through an area of shrubs which they call the 'secret garden'. Children confidently help themselves to the broad range of clear safe toys and books, which are placed on open shelves. They make informed decisions as boxes containing toys are clearly labelled with both picture and words.

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

The provision is good.

Babies and young children make very good progress as there is an effective planning cycle. Every six weeks parents and staff review children's learning, and set new targets which are then used, in conjunction with observations to plan for their next stage in learning. Children's progress is monitored using Birth to three, for which all staff have received training, and includes well presented photographs and samples of art work accompanied by written comments, together with both brief and narrative observations. Babies are emotionally secure as staff follow their home routine and they move through the day with their key worker. Babies develop an awareness of themselves as they look in the mirror and staff explain it is them. Those between the age of one and two years develop fine muscle skills as they use sponges and paint brushes to mark make on paper. Some explore the paint by dabbing the brush in and out of the paint. Others paint their hands and afterwards try to clean their hands with a tissue. On some occasions young children all paint together on a large piece of paper so that they begin to learn how to work together. By the age of two years children's social skills have developed so that they form friendships and work together at activities. Language skills are promoted well by the constant gentle interaction from staff, who acknowledge babies' sounds. Those children just over a year

begin to form words. Two year old children begin to join in with action rhymes, such as, 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.

Staff follow through on young children's interests so they are motivated to learn and develop confidence. By the age of two years children confidently inform staff they should cut up an apple and which section of the serving plate they should put it. When babies pick up a book and turn the pages, staff explain the picture. Alert to their senses they feel the different textures on each page. Children learn from the example set by staff as they dig in the sand. Two year olds play with dough and feel the texture as they break it into small pieces and place one piece in each dip in a baking tray until it is full. Young children are given the opportunity to develop independence as they try to wash their own hands. They develop co-ordination as they use a dustpan and brush to sweep up sand. Two year olds help to prepare grapes for snack by taking them from the bunch and passing them to staff, one at a time. Babies become familiar with numbers as staff name the numerals they try and fit into a shape sorter using problem solving skills. By the age of two years children know the sequence of numbers to seven and are able to complete simple jigsaw puzzles. Two year olds know the primary colours and show some understanding of nature as they name different farm animals. Staff encourage two year old children to make informed decisions about the activities in which they wish to participate. When they first join the group children move around the room as a train looking at what toys are available. As they get older they select the activity by using a prop from each area of the room, so that by the age of three years they are able to use a picture planning board.

### Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good as all staff are knowledgeable about the Foundation Stage and know how to promote learning. In parallel with that of younger children, there is a very effective planning cycle which is reviewed on a six weekly basis with parents, and incorporates children's comments. Children's learning is encouraged as staff follow through on their interests, which are often incorporated into learning stories. There is a system in place for ensuring that all children receive a rounded education. Overall activities are well organised and staff adapt activities according to children's level of ability. For example, staff introduced a board where children could place their name against a job they wished to do in nursery, but as children could not understand the concept this was placed to one side, until a later stage when children are ready. Children use good mouse control as they operate simple computer programmes related to the beach. Organisation of the computer is not always so well managed. Some children patiently watch their peers as they wait for a turn, but do not have an opportunity to use the computer. Staff determine activities according to children's mood during the day. When they become loud, staff help children to manage this by taking a few children to another room to play a quiet game. Children are very independent as they are provided with the time and opportunity, which is reflected in other areas of learning. For example physical skills are extended as children change their clothes and fasten buttons.

Children are very confident as staff praise their achievements and when a child makes a decision about an activity, staff reinforce the decision by commenting that it was 'a good idea'. At other times children's achievements are acknowledged as they show the remainder of the group that they have made a gingerbread lady from play dough. Children enjoy exploring the play dough as they squeeze it between their hands and cut it with a knife, commenting that it looks like a piece of meat. Children also use their imagination to create boats out of good quality construction materials.

Children have good communication skills and are able to explain a television programme about Rory the car, and after confidently answering their name at register are keen to share their news. They recognise their name in print as they select their card for self registration. Children's understanding of print carrying meaning is reinforced as a member of staff points out each word on a white board as she reads it too them. Children snuggle up as they listen to a story about 'Topsy and Tim' visiting the doctor. When listening to the stories as a whole group, although staff use good intonation, a few children lose interest as they do not have the same level of concentration as more able children. Other children are interested in the book and comment that the dinosaur in the picture is scared because he has a scared face and familiar with the story join in with some sections. Children join in with both actions and words to song 'The wheels on the bus'. Children develop pencil control as they draw pictures of family members. They paint pictures and explore what happens when they mix the colours together. Some children add cartoons from the recycled waste and proud of their achievements ask staff to look at what they have made. Children review their chosen activities, initially through brief discussion, but as they progress through the year they draw pictures and mark make, sometimes forming recognisable letters.

Children form friendships and ask that their friends sit next to them during lunch. Good concentration is shown as they engage in the same theme as their peers during imaginary play. They pretend to be 'Power Rangers' as they run around outside and kill a monster. Indoors they organise themselves into a family; mum, dad and the dog. When the dog escapes from the home, children use problem solving skills and after the dog is returned, place a toy ironing board across the door. Children show an awareness of time and as they look at the clock point out the written numerals. They recognise colours and are able to name simple two-dimensional shapes. After estimating how many children are present, they count as a group, so that they become familiar with the sequence of higher numbers.

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

The provision is good.

Children who are new to the nursery are assisted through the transition as they gradually become familiar with their key worker during a number of introductory visits. Babies are emotionally secure as they move through the day with their key worker, have their comforters from home and there is a close working relationship between parents and staff. Key workers ensure that older children have toys that will interest them and offer words of reassurance that mum will return later. There is also a gradual transition when children move from one room to another. The effective two way communication with parents facilitates children's individual needs being met on a daily basis. Children are confident knowing they are all valued and included. Staff also have experience of working in partnership with parents and other professionals, to meet children's additional needs.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. Staff have a proactive approach to behaviour management and as a result children are well behaved. When they become loud they quickly become quiet as staff sing the 'Listening song'. When playing 'Power Rangers' and children get a little boisterous staff call them over and explain that they are worried children may get hurt and as a 'Power Ranger' it is their job to protect them. They learn to consider others as they serve out the lunch. A respect for the environment is shown as children tidy away toys when they hear the classical music playing, and wipe their feet before coming indoors. Those just over a year are already aware that they must place their used paper towels in the bin. From a young age children's love of nature is fostered as babies are taken on outings to see the animals at Grimsby Farm. Once a year all children, parents and staff visit

Avon Valley Country Park. Children learn about life cycles as they watch tiny eggs hatch into caterpillars, and then transform into butterflies. They plant tomatoes and observe them growing.

Children develop a positive attitude to difference as they confidently help themselves to a good range of resources reflecting positive images of diversity, for example in the home corner there is a Chinese tea set. Children learn about their own culture as birthdays are acknowledged with a 'Happy Birthday' song from all children and they share a cake. They also learn that other cultures are different. For example, at the time of the Chinese New Year there is discussion about China, children are given access to authentic resources, sample Chinese food using chop sticks and are provided with resources to make masks. Once a year, the nursery accepts two German students on a short placement. Children learn about the local community as pupils from the school visit the nursery to share their dance routines and play a range of musical instruments. Children have also received visits from the librarian who reads a story and are joined for lunch by a police officer.

The partnership with parents is good and parents are frequently consulted about changes within the nursery, for example the menu and development of the outside area. Children's education is enhanced through parents' active involvement in target setting for their children and fund raising to purchase new equipment. Parents are invited to join staff on training in relation to Makaton sign language and behaviour management, so that children are provided with consistency of care. Parents are well informed about the provision, via an initial information pack which is pertinent to the age of their child, copies of policies and procedures, and are regularly updated via notice boards and newsletters. There are also good systems in place for keeping parents informed about their child's day and on a more formal basis parents meet with their key worker twice a year to discuss their child's overall progress. Parents comments about the provision are very positive; 'staff are incredibly friendly', 'understand children' and make their child 'feel special'.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The provider meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide. There are rigorous recruitment procedures to ensure the suitability of staff to work with children. Ongoing suitability is checked via bi-monthly support meetings and annual appraisal. Although there is an experienced, stable staff group so that children are provided with consistency of care, there is a thorough induction procedure, so that new staff are clear about their role and responsibilities. There are regular staff meetings and good communication systems in place. Keen to extend practice staff have attended further training since the last inspection, for example, child protection, Forest Schools, High Scope, and one member of staff has completed a Foundation Degree. Staff are enthusiastic about their work and this is reflected in the quality of practice. Children thrive in the welcoming environment which facilitates good communication skills, confidence and independence. Working in close partnership with parents and an effective planning cycle based on children's interests and next steps in learning, ensures that every child makes very good progress. Paperwork is suitably organised, confidentially maintained and regularly reviewed, although the behaviour management policy now needs to be completed and shared with parents so that it accurately reflects practice. Documentation complies with both regulatory requirements and the National Standards so that children's safety and welfare are promoted.

Leadership and management are good. The manager has been proactive in ensuring that all staff are knowledgeable about both the Foundation Stage and High Scope. There are systems

in place to ensure that children receive a broad curriculum. The leader has undertaken further training which she has disseminated to colleagues so that they are aware of what they need to do in order for children to achieve their full potential. Recognising the importance of planning for children's individual needs has been facilitated by allocated time to this task. The leader and manager are aware of strengths within the provision and although continually reviewing how to extend learning, and sometimes temporarily removing an activity, children's learning would have been further enhanced with slight changes in some areas of the organisation for nursery education. Plans to extend the nursery education programme include visiting children at home.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection in October 2003 the provider agreed to meet one recommendation which required them to further develop suitable arrangements to ensure children are safe and well supervised whilst playing in and outdoors. This related to there being only one member of staff outdoors with children, so that if a child wished to use the bathroom, all children needed to come indoors. Since this time the situation has been better managed as all children wishing to play outdoors visit the bathroom first. In the event of one child having an accident outdoors staff are confident that they could easily draw the attention of other staff members through the low level windows which overlook the outdoor area, so that children's safety is not compromised. There was also an action which required the provider to develop thorough vetting procedures. Children are now protected as there is now a rigorous recruitment system in place.

The last education inspection was also undertaken in October 2003. The one key issue related to working inflexibly in small group activities. Staff have progressed since this time and no longer operate in the same way. All small group work is now open ended so that staff are able to follow through on children's interests and everyone's learning extended.

### **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):



- develop a new risk assessment to cover health and hygiene
- continue to develop the behaviour management policy

### **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 look at the organisation of activities.

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)