

# Richmond House Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY293670
<b>Inspection date</b>	05 November 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Joan Isabel Madden
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<b>Registered person</b>	Atherton House Nurseries Ltd
<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?

Richmond House Kindergarten was re-registered under the present owners in 2004. It operates from four rooms on the ground floor and two rooms on the first floor. The cellar is used as a nursery Montessori prepared environment for the younger children. A maximum of 60 children may attend the kindergarten at any one time. It is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 all year round. Children attend for a variety of sessions. They share access to a secure outdoor play area. The kindergarten is privately owned.

There are currently 72 children aged from two years to under five years on roll. Of these, 37 children receive funding for early education. The kindergarten serves the local area. There are children on roll who speak English as an additional language. There are 14 members of staff who work directly with the children. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards an early years qualification. Additionally two staff hold the Diploma in Montessori teaching, of whom one works with the younger children and the other with the pre-school children. The setting receives support from Sure Start.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

Effective procedures are followed by the staff to protect the children from illness and infection. The premises are clean and well maintained. Staff clean up throughout the day when necessary. Sensible hygiene measures are employed in the kindergarten. For example, fresh sheets are put on the mattresses each time the younger children have a nap. Documentation arising from environmental health visits confirm the provision is meeting their requirements. Children understand the need for simple good health and hygiene practices. They learn how to use the toilet independently including washing their hands as part of the routine. Children are treated appropriately for minor injuries, as staff are qualified in first aid and there is a fully stocked first aid box. Documentation relating to accidents and medication is correctly maintained helping to underpin sensible procedures. High priority is put upon the children developing their physical skills and a healthy lifestyle. All children play out regularly in the safe outdoor area where the play areas can be sectioned off to suit the children's different needs. Children enjoy riding wheeled toys and in doing so learn to negotiate space. They climb the large slide to develop their climbing and balancing skills. Children have opportunities to develop other skills using a wide range of equipment. A range of equipment and toys encourage the children to play outdoors and enjoy the fresh air. There are benched areas where children can sit and reflect or listen to stories.

Nutritious food and discussion promotes the children's good health. On inspection day children enjoyed a healthy snack of cucumbers and apples. Staff encourage children to bring healthy packed lunches to kindergarten. Water is made available to the children at all times. Children have their health and dietary needs met because staff work well with parents to gain the relevant information that is recorded onto sheets. All staff are informed of the children's dietary needs.

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

The provision is good.

Children feel welcome in organised and well-maintained premises which are suitable for purpose. Space is organised effectively to enable children to benefit from a wide balanced range of experiences. The rooms are stimulating and welcoming with displays, signs and pictures reflecting children's recent experiences. The premises are maintained at a comfortable temperature. There are suitable nappy changing and laundry facilities helping to underpin the care of the children. The kindergarten is equipped to promote all areas of learning. Children confidently choose from a balanced range of activities helping to develop their confidence and decision making skills.

The furniture, toys and equipment are well maintained, safe and clean, helping to protect the children's well-being. If an item was thought to be hazardous it would be removed immediately.

In the main there are good processes in place to keep children safe and no safety issues have been identified. However staff do not consistently review and update written risk assessments or the records of daily safety. The premises are secure indoors and outdoors. Children, staff and visitors are recorded as they enter and leave the building. Children learn to keep themselves safe, as they take part in fire drills and learn to tidy up after themselves.

Children are protected because staff understand their role in safeguarding children and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. The procedures for reporting concerns about children's welfare are in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. Staff are reminded of their responsibilities during meetings and any new guidelines or legislation are cascaded down to them.

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

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled. Staff operate a key worker system that enables them to meet the individual needs of the children more effectively. There is a good induction procedure for settling children into the kindergarten that involves the parents. As a result children settle well and soon begin to take part in activities that help them to learn and acquire skills. Staff have a clear understanding of the developmental needs of the younger children and curriculum planning is based on the 'Birth to three matters' framework along with Montessori teaching. There is a wide range and balance of activities to promote their learning and children take part in both adult-led and child initiated activities. Throughout the day staff offer support and interact with the young children to help them progress. They enjoy taking part in role-play, playing in sand and water, painting, modelling with play dough, small world play and completing jigsaws. Children are highly motivated about taking part in the Montessori aspect of their day. The programme is successfully helping them to develop a high level of independence and concentration. There is a very calm atmosphere as they choose from very accessible resources around the Montessori room. They are very good at putting resources back in the correct position.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Foundation Stage children are accommodated on the first floor in a stimulating and age appropriate environment. The walls are covered with displays reflecting the children's experiences and work. This helps them to feel valued and encouraged. Children receive a high level of support and guidance from the staff as they take part in a wide, balanced range of activities. Staff are secure in their knowledge of the Foundation Stage, enthusiastic and conscientious. They are good role models and set a very professional tone. They promote the children's thinking by asking appropriate open-ended questions and encourage them to talk about their experiences as they play. Staff effectively put the comprehensive curriculum planning into place. The continuous provision plans displayed around the Foundation Stage in each provision area are clearly linked to the six areas of learning. Medium term plans are linked to a theme. They identify key learning objectives in the six areas of learning, context for learning, focused activities and enhancements for the continuous provision that link into the theme. Short term planning include identifying the specific learning outcomes for children in the six areas of learning, detailed adult directed activities and how children are to be supported in the provision areas. Through the theme of 'Festivals' children enthusiastically record their experiences of bonfire night in their drawings, glitter and splatter painting. As they work, they talk about the firework displays they have seen. In the main the methods of assessing the children are developing well. Longer observation sheets are successfully used to inform planning and the next learning steps for individual children. However the 'quick observation' sheets are not used as effectively. This also applies to the assessments of the younger children.

Children have good relationships with peers and staff. Groups of children are able to initiate play situations, negotiate boundaries and co-operate with one another. All resources are at

child height helping them to choose and carry out activities independently. Children have good opportunities to promote their self help skills at meal and snacks times as they serve food, pour their own drinks and generally help with domestic tasks. Generally the children's communication, language and literacy skills are developing well. They are exposed to an array of printed letters and words around the pre-school, learning that print carries meaning and to recognise their names and common words. As the children play many of them spontaneously write and draw helping them to use writing as a means of recording and communicating. They are often seen writing their own names. Through Montessori teaching and in other adult focussed activities the children are being introduced to letters and sounds. The children experience some play based experiences that promote letters and sounds. However there is too much emphasis put upon children to also complete worksheets and books. Many of them are not ready to do so. Children confidently access books and are learning how to handle them appropriately, thereby developing the enjoyment of reading. High priority is put upon imaginative play including role play and small world play. Children have many opportunities for counting and recognising numbers in their learning environment. For example, children enjoy completing number jigsaws and there are opportunities for the more able children to select supplementary puzzles that encourage them to beyond 10. Throughout the session children handle and explore shapes and in doing so learn about their properties. Pegging and threading activities help children to form and recognise patterns.

Through themes children develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. For example, the current topic of 'Festivals' enables children to gain an awareness of the cultures and beliefs of others. Small world play helps the children to make sense of the world around them. Children work on simple computer programmes and in doing so are learning to use technological equipment. They help to look after the goldfish and thereby learn about living things. Children have good opportunities to develop their creative skills both in child initiated and adult-led activities. They enjoy painting, drawing and chalking. Examples of their works are displayed around the room signalling to children that their work is valued. They explore different textures as they mould with play dough and play in water and sand. In music sessions with a peripatetic teacher children enjoy playing instruments, joining in with simple songs and actions songs.

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

The provision is good.

Staff demonstrate a sound awareness of equal opportunities, learning difficulties and disability issues. There are positive staff to child ratios enabling staff to meet children's needs more effectively. Children are warmly greeted by staff who are interested in what the children have to say. They are very well supported in their chosen activities, helping to extend their learning and acquisition of skills. Birthdays are celebrated helping children to feel a sense of belonging. Children benefit from using resources and taking part in activities that reflect equal opportunities. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities are welcomed into the setting, where they would be well supported.

Children are very well behaved, mannerly and friendly. There are incentives in place to encourage children to respond appropriately to behavioural expectations within the setting. For example, children who have achieved are rewarded with golden tickets and have their names placed on the 'Golden Tree'. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. There is an effective induction period in place that involves the parents. Parents are offered regular meetings with staff when they can view their child's assessment folder. For parents collecting at the end of the day the key worker

system ensures parents are kept informed of events in their children's day, however, this is not always the case, for the parents, of those children collected in the middle of the day.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management are good. The proprietor who is an experienced teacher and provider has a clear vision for the provision of high quality nursery education. There are clear management structures including a manager, deputy and room leaders who are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. Senior staff work directly with the children and as part of the team and therefore are able to monitor provision and activities on a daily basis. They have many positive strategies in place for continually raising standards. Staff meetings are held monthly where there are procedures in place for staff to focus on an identified aspect of the provision, to analyse in detail and where appropriate improve their practice. Annual appraisals of the staff take place, from these their training needs are identified and opportunities provided for them to take up the training. The setting receives regular visits from Sure Start who provide them with advice and support. Staff are confident, secure in their knowledge of the Foundation Stage and 'Birth to three matters' framework. There are training opportunities for staff in the new Early Years Foundation Stage and they have a very positive attitude to the forthcoming changes.

Organisation is good, resulting in positive outcomes for children. Recruitment and vetting procedures ensure children are well protected and cared for by staff with knowledge and understanding of child development. Staff have a good understanding of the conditions of their registration and how to meet the standards. Positive adult to child ratios and staff deployment contribute to children's good health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to take an active part in the setting. Records, policies and procedures work in practice to underpin the good care of the children. Children follow a sensible routine that includes a free-play session, outdoor play, snacks, meals adult-led activity, sleep and rest time. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection staff were required to improve safety and documentation. An extra handrail has been fitted to the wall of the stairs to improve children's safety on the staircase. The written statement of the arrangements in place for the protection of children now states staff responsibilities with regard to the reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect in accordance with the local Area Child Protection Committee. The complaints policy now includes information on how to contact Ofsted.

## **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 the system for the regular exchange of information between parents and key workers particularly for those children collected at the end of the morning session
- ensure risk assessments are regularly reviewed and the daily records of safety checks are kept up to date.

#### 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):

- place more emphasis on play based experiences in the teaching of letters and sounds
- make more effective use of short observations to inform next steps in the children's learning and assess their achievements in line with the relevant curriculum framework (also applies to care).

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)