

Rastrick Nursery & Independent School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY290475
Inspection date	18 February 2008
Inspector	Helene Anne Terry
Setting Address	Rastrick Independent School, Ogden Lane, Brighouse, West Yorkshire, HD6 3HF
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Registered person	Rastrick Educational Services 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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Rastrick Independent School opened in 1994. It is a privately owned company run by the head/director. The school's honorary governing body supports the head in decision making about the school. The setting caters for children from birth to 16 years of age. There are five departments; Phoenix House Nursery School, Pre-Preparatory Department Close Lea House, Preparatory School including Kindergarten, Grammar School and Holiday Club which includes before and after school care. The school is situated in the Rastrick area of Brighouse, West Yorkshire. It operates from three buildings set within its own grounds close to local amenities. There are outdoor play facilities within the school grounds.

Children attending the school come from the wide surrounding areas. They reflect the cultural and religious backgrounds of these areas. The Foundation Stage is offered to the children attending Close Lea House and the Kindergarten situated in the main school; full and part-time places are available. Children are grouped according to their age and are organised into either one of two groups in the nursery school or the reception class. Children in the nursery classes are between the ages of two and four years and in the reception class, four and five years. A maximum of 180 children may attend the setting, including the out of school care at any one

time. Daycare is offered each week day between the hours of 07.30 until 18.30 all year round apart from bank holidays. Nursery education is provided term time between the hours of 08.40 until 15.30.

There are currently 178 children aged from 11 months to four years on roll. Of these 48 children receive funding for nursery education. The school employs 19 members of staff who work with the early years and out of school children. 17 of the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications including three qualified teachers. Two staff are working towards a qualification and the childcare coordinator is working towards Early Years Professional Status.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy regular opportunities to be active both inside and outside the nursery to promote their physical skills as well as their health, growth and confidence. For example, they enjoy outdoor games, playing on wheeled toys and catching, chasing and retrieving balls. Older children are encouraged to stretch their skills by playing on the balancing equipment and stepping stones and building constructions from the crates. Children also have opportunities to do gymnastics in the school hall.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through effective routines and staff practice. For example, staff encourage children to wash their hands before meals and snacks and after using the toilet or undertaking messy activities. Staff protect children from cross-infection by providing them with individual bed linen, paper towels to dry hands and wipes to clean faces. Nappy changing arrangements reflect good hygiene policies and procedures.

The setting works in partnership with parents to meet individual dietary needs. Staff are aware of any special diets and children are offered alternative meals when required. They meet the needs of babies well by implementing their individual routines that are discussed in detail with parents and recorded. This helps with the transition from the home to nursery care. Baby feeds are labelled and stored safely. The meals, drinks and snacks offered throughout the day to children provide healthy options. Most foods offered to the children are organic and many fruit and vegetables are grown in the school's garden. These are freshly prepared on site by the cook. Staff preparing and serving meals to children have attended training in food hygiene and use the knowledge gained within their practice. Meal times are organised effectively, with extra staff on duty to support the children. However, food is individually plated before being transferred to the tables and as a result children do not have the opportunity to serve themselves or make choices about what or how much they would like to eat. Drinks are freely available for all children. The system to encourage children to access their own drinks throughout the day is effectively managed; children access water from a jug within their playrooms. This keeps children well hydrated.

All staff hold current first aid certificates. This helps to ensure children's needs are met in the event of an accident or emergency. Written parental permission is requested for the school to seek any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment. A written sick children policy is provided that includes details of procedures to follow, exclusion periods and information about specific illnesses. All policies, procedures and records relating to accidents and medication are maintained very well and shared with parents.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The setting is welcoming and stimulating; child-centred posters, information for parents and examples of the children's creative work are attractively displayed, making a welcoming environment for all. Rooms are well ventilated and there is plenty of natural daylight. However, heating temperatures in some areas in the school used by the after school children, at the time of the inspection, were cold. Rooms are effectively organised to allow the children to participate in a very good range of activities. The children are able to freely select toys and equipment, which are provided to foster all areas of their development; they are accessible and well positioned and kept in a clean and safe condition.

Safety throughout the setting is fully considered. Thorough risk assessments alongside regular safety checks by staff are completed to ensure risks are minimised for children. Security is fully maintained with the outdoor play areas fenced and secure, and a bell and intercom system on the door are in place to monitor access to the provision. Safety procedures implemented ensure children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted very well. For example, the staff use two-way radios in the after school club to ensure contact between the various play areas in the school. Appropriate fire safety equipment is provided and regular toy and equipment safety checks are completed. The children participate in regular fire evacuations and the staff frequently discuss safety issues with them. For example, they are reminded to hold scissors carefully and they learn about road safety during activities and on outings. Consequently, children are actively learning how to keep themselves safe.

The staff have a good understanding of child protection procedures. They are aware of signs to be vigilant of and the procedures to follow if any concerns are identified in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Parents are also informed of staff's responsibility to the children in this area.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at the setting. They receive extremely good support from all of the skilled staff. Each child is nurtured in their play and learning, enabling them to meet their full potential. Children of all ages are fully engaged in the exciting opportunities offered to them. They achieve well as staff are highly skilled and use their excellent understanding of early years frameworks to provide high quality care and education. Staff have already introduced and are working with the Early Years Foundation Stage, which is due to be implemented in all settings in September 2008.

Babies and young children are offered an impressive range of rich and stimulating opportunities to investigate and explore their environment. Staff interact playfully with the babies and young children. They are attentive to the children's creative explorations, providing assistance in a way that does not disrupt their flow of thinking. Through unobtrusive support children are given the emotional security to experiment. Babies investigate natural and man-made resources which they discover, such as different kinds of treasure baskets. They use their senses to investigate objects and materials. They enjoy tactile experiences of investigating water, paint and sand. Children delight in rolling a ball in the paint and observing the patterns it makes as it rolls over the paper. Staff allow children to further experiment using their hands to feel the paint and make hand prints. Children of two to three years are beginning to learn about their environment as they observe the changes to seasons on their visits out in the environment.

They grow plants and observe the changes right through until decay giving them an understanding of life cycles and a sense of time. Children are given opportunities to explore their interests, as the planning of the curriculum is fluid. For example, children who show an interest in the lines aeroplanes make in the sky access creative materials to enable them to represent what they see in the form of paint and collage.

Activities that promote children's language and social skills are promoted well by staff who have constant discussions with children, extending children's interests. For example, staff reinforce and repeat vocalisations and language spoken within the baby and toddler room. Children make choices and are involved in decision making by having exceptionally well organised resources and free-choice activities available for them to self-select. This supplements adult-focused activities in all areas of the nursery and after school care.

Children in the after school care (Night Owls) are very motivated and interested in a broad range of purposeful and developmentally appropriate indoor and outdoor activities that provide excellent levels of challenge. The older children take part in a very good range of extra curricular activities provided by the school, such as homework clubs, netball, choir, music lessons and a French club. Children state that they enjoy the 'Night Owls', because they can do lots of interesting activities and go on visits during the school holidays.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are highly motivated because of the extremely good teaching from highly skilled staff. They are interested in the extensive range of rich, varied and imaginative experiences offered. Staff make sure activities are planned to ensure all individual children are challenged in their development. They recognise the importance of giving children time to practise their newly acquired skills and to develop good levels of concentration and perseverance. Staff utilise every possible opportunity to promote children's learning. They instinctively ask children questions pitched at the right level so children are challenged to think, and they introduce children to mathematical ideas and offer problems to solve. They embrace ideas from children and build upon children's interests when planning the curriculum using the Early Years Foundation Stage. Skilful use of assessment and information sharing between staff ensures that future plans build upon what children already know and can do. Children's progress from the time of starting at the setting is excellent. Their progress across all areas of learning is outstanding.

Children are motivated, interested and maintain attention well as they sit quietly during circle time. They are sociable and initiate interactions with their peers and staff. They also show care and concerns for others. For example, a child asks another child if they have been crying, stating 'I have been crying too because I hurt myself, look'. Children operate independently within the setting and show confidence when they are asked to do little tasks for the staff, such as pass messages between the rooms. They dress and undress themselves, sometimes with the help from staff and tidy the activities away. The more able four year olds pour drinks for their peers and take pride in their roles.

The more able children speak very clearly and express themselves orally with confidence. They use language to share ideas, ask questions, talk through activities and recall past experiences. They often initiate conversation with their peers, staff and even unfamiliar adults. Children are introduced to new words to extend their vocabulary. All children have the opportunity to share their thoughts. Children greatly enjoy books and join in enthusiastically with group stories. They talk about what they see in book illustrations and link stories to their own experiences.

They confidently predict what is going to happen next in some stories, when they are asked 'What happens to the apples when Mr Bump bumps into the tree?'. Children freely access the books in the comfortable book area and they enjoy imitating the adults as they pretend to read the stories to other children. Children enjoy rhyming songs and stories and some are beginning to make the links between sounds and letters. Children see print used for different purposes. They see signs and labels within their play areas. They recognise their own names and more able children are beginning to recognise the sounds of syllables in their names as they beat out the rhythm on the drum. Children freely access writing materials and they also understand that a computer can also be used to produce written material.

Children use numbers and count very well during their play. They count objects saying one number name for each item as they count the bricks. More able children recognise some written numbers and can place the corresponding number of bricks next to that number. Children can order objects by length as they place the worms they have made from the dough in order from shortest to the longest. Practical activities provide children with opportunities to problem solve and calculate by combining objects, sorting and sharing out.

Children eagerly investigate many interesting objects and materials. They freely access resources to promote exploration and staff are on hand to further develop children's natural curiosity. For example, children look at items that sink and float in the water tray. Children learn about the natural environment. They do gardening and gain an awareness of time as they plant bulbs and wait for them to grow. Resource books are at hand to aid children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Children build and construct using their own design ideas, on small and large scale indoors and outdoors. For example, they consider how to build a castle using the large bricks in the playroom whilst other children do a similar activity using the smaller bricks. Children freely use computers positioned at child level. Many operate these unaided as they discover how to operate the equipment.

The children are very imaginative. They dress up and take on roles linking up with others engaged in the same theme. Much of their imaginative play is based on their own first-hand experiences, such as making meals and imitating adults as they pretend to read books to the other children. Children have good opportunities to enjoy singing activities and explore sounds with musical instruments. They participate in a varied range of activities where they can use their senses and express their feelings and ideas. They select materials to represent facial features as they make faces and create hedgehogs from dough.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children benefit from the very good partnership developed between staff and parents. Children are cared for according to parents' wishes which promotes continuity of care and their well-being. There are effective systems in place to ensure information is shared on a regular basis about their child's progress and daily activities, for example, through daily chats, good access to development records and written information on babies' daily routines. Policies and procedures are available to parents and newsletters and notice boards are used to update them on any changes and forthcoming events. Parents' views about the provision are sought by management and any concerns and ideas are acted upon to enhance the care and education provided for the children. Parents comment on their high satisfaction of the care their children receive. The school is active in the community and takes part in fundraising events.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is outstanding. Parents receive excellent information about the Foundation Stage and their children's progress. Parents' evenings are held twice a year and they receive in-depth reports about their child's progress. Parents are encouraged to bring in items associated with themes and topics ongoing in the nursery to involve them in their child's learning. To further enhance their children's development parents are given information on how they can extend the topics and their child's learning at home.

The staff have a very good commitment to equality of opportunity, they recognise children as individuals and as a result, the children benefit from having their differing needs effectively met. The school has good arrangements in place to support children with learning difficulties and disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. Children are able to access a good range of interesting resources and activities to actively raise their awareness of diversity and to promote their understanding of others. For example, dressing-up clothes, books, dolls and play people provide interesting opportunities for children to explore other cultures, traditions and people with disabilities.

Children's behaviour is exemplary; this is as a result of staff's close contact with the children and a positive approach to behaviour management. Staff use lots of appropriate praise and encouragement to raise children's self-esteem and confidence. The children respond well to gentle reminders to share and take turns. They learn to empathise and negotiate with one another. Children adapt well to changes in the daily routine and the more able understand the boundaries and expectations of the setting. Children are very polite, especially in the after school care; they pleasantly greet adults and hold doors open to allow entry into the rooms. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Space, resources and the deployment of staff is organised very effectively to support play and learning opportunities for the children. There is a robust recruitment system in place. All staff working in the setting are suitably vetted, and there are clear staff recruitment procedures in place to protect children. All staff receive a good induction into the nursery and they are aware of the policies and procedures. Adult-to-child ratios are effectively maintained owing to staff rotas and extra staff are brought in to cover the lunch time period. All policies, procedures and records required for the efficient and safe management of the provision and to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are well maintained.

Leadership and management within the setting are outstanding. The head teacher and her management team support staff extremely well through an effective appraisal system and training programme. They are encouraged to enhance their personal development, which impacts effectively on the care, education and well-being of the children. The majority of the staff hold qualifications in early years and teaching and continuity of care is effectively offered. Staff are very aware of their roles and responsibilities within the setting and they are supportive as a team. The monitoring and evaluation systems in place are highly effective and rigorously undertaken by staff and the head teacher. The setting is currently working towards a quality assurance award with the local authority. Everyone is committed to the continued improvement of the care and education of the children. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last nursery education inspection there was a point for consideration that the setting continue to provide and maintain the excellent educational provision. The school continues to provide excellent nursery education for the children attending.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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 complaint record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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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):

- consider the reorganisation of mealtimes to enable children to make choices and serve themselves
- ensure that all areas used by the children are maintained at an adequate temperature throughout the day.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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