

# Rascals

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY271249
<b>Inspection date</b>	20 February 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Lisa Paisley
<b>Setting Address</b>	Fairways Primary School, The Fairway, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, SS9 4QW
<b>Telephone number</b>	07787 124754
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Polardreams Limited
<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?

Rascals day nursery and out of school club is run by an independent organisation. It opened in 2003 and expanded to offer full day care in 2007. The provision operates from a self-contained building in a local primary school in Leigh-on-Sea, Essex. A maximum of 73 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.00 to 19.00 all year round. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 50 children aged from birth to under five years on roll. Of these, six receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area.

The nursery employs 15 nursery staff. Eleven of the staff, including both managers, hold appropriate early years qualifications. Four staff are currently attending training. The setting receives support from the local authority.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

Children benefit from being cared for in an environment where a very good standard of hygiene practices are maintained. Children learn about hygiene routines through washing their hands appropriately, for example after creative activities and before snack and meal times. Good quality pictorial notices at children's height provide children with consistent reminders to wash their hands effectively. Children have access to liquid soap, warm running water and paper hand towels ensuring that the risk of cross-infection is minimised. They also know to wipe their noses when needed and cover their mouths when coughing to further reduce the risk of cross-infection. Over half the staff currently hold first aid certificates and the first aid boxes are located in each room. Staff have a very good awareness of the medical needs of individual children and clearly written care plans are in place to support them. This ensures that children receive very good care if they become ill or have an accident.

Children develop healthy eating habits as staff encourage them to try different foods and talk to them about what foods are good for them. They also participate in planned topics that promote healthy lifestyles, for example 'All about me'. Meals at the nursery are balanced and nutritious as food provided is made from fresh ingredients and have a low salt and sugar content. A wide variety of foods are offered such as pasta dishes, sausage casserole and sweet and sour vegetable stir fry. Children's individual dietary needs are met by staff who are aware of their allergies and dislikes. The details are in each room of the nursery so that staff can check them at any time. Facilities to prepare food for children are of a good standard of cleanliness as clear and effective management systems are in place to ensure the suitability of the kitchen for preparing food. Children are able to rest and relax in comfortable surroundings according to their individual needs and daily routines. Fresh drinking water is freely available throughout the day and children are encouraged to help themselves fostering independence. Staff maintain good written records for each child to ensure their individual health and dietary requirements are met.

Children enthusiastically enjoy a wide variety of activities that contribute to keeping them healthy. The garden is effectively designed to provide children with a good variety of play activities and experiences. Children enjoy using the tricycles, scooters, pushing prams, playing with the sand and hiding in the play tent. Children's manipulative hands skills are successfully promoted through the range of tools such as scissors, pencils, paintbrushes, threading and puzzles that children use well. Consequently children are progressing very well in their physical development.

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

The provision is good.

The nursery has highly effective and secure measures in place, ensuring that risks to children's safety, both indoors and outdoors, are minimised such as clear procedures for the safe arrival and departure of children to and from the nursery. Comprehensive written risk assessments are in place and are effective in ensuring that potential hazards to children are minimised. For example, a secure main entrance where all visitors are required to show their identification badge and sign the visitors book to confirm the visit, all low-level electrical sockets are protected and all fire exits are clearly identified and in working order ensuring children can leave the premises safely. There are comprehensive and clearly written safety procedures in place that

staff know about and are consistently applied. Staff have a good practical understanding of how to organise space, furniture and equipment enabling children to move freely and independently between activities and different play areas. As a result, children feel confident within the nursery and are safe and secure.

All the nursery rooms and communal areas are brightly decorated with good quality displays of children's art work, posters, photographs and letter and number print. The premises are clean, well lit and effectively heated, ensuring that it is suitable for children to use at all times. Resources in each room are effectively well organised so they are attractive and accessible to children. Play equipment and resources for babies and young children are set out on the floor and on low tables for them to reach by rolling, crawling and pulling themselves up. Older children are able to use low drawers and shelves to choose toys and resources as well as the range of activities that are set out each day by staff. Children enthusiastically self-select their own play resources which are appropriate to their ages and stages of development. Play equipment is stored at child height, promoting independence and choice. Children learn about keeping themselves safe through regular fire drills and by gentle, sensitive reminders from staff, for example, walking indoors and running outside in the garden, tidying away toys and sitting on chairs sensibly.

Children are effectively protected as staff have a secure understanding of child protection procedures and how to keep children safe and most of the staff have completed child protection training. A written policy is in place and staff are able to recognise signs of abuse and know whom to contact if they are concerned about a child in their care. A named staff member is responsible for child protection and they have a clear understanding of their role, through attending training and keeping up to date with any changes such as the implementation of a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). Parents are informed of the group's responsibility regarding child protection, reassuring parents of their child's welfare.

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

The provision is good.

Children are effectively well occupied during their time at the nursery as they show good interest and purposeful play in what they do. They are able to make choices about the activities they choose and move independently around all the areas of the group room and communal areas. Children are supported very well throughout the day and are secure as staff have a very good understanding of children's individual needs. They feel secure and valued as staff have good nurturing skills, this enables children to settle quickly into the environment and move confidently between activities. All children are provided with a very good range of activities; for example sand, jelly, water, play dough, puzzles, books, construction and role play. However, outdoor play activities occasionally restrict children's play experiences as the outdoor play activities are not fully extended to maximise children's play and learning in the outdoor environment.

Staff working with children under three have a good knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. This, combined with their effective knowledge of children's individual developmental stages helps them to plan and deliver activities which help children to learn and develop in line with their age and ability. Babies and young children are provided with a very good range of exciting and stimulating activities such as sand, gloop, body painting, books, puzzles, role play and outdoor play. Children's interest and imaginations are successfully captured as staff support this by encouraging children to explore and investigate toys and resources. Staff are also continuously talking, explaining and encouraging children in their play and learning and during transitions in daily routines, for example washing their hands after snack time. Staff also take

time to play with individual children, sharing books, encouraging crawling, painting or making noises with toys and instruments; helping children to develop in confidence and ensuring that they feel valued and included.

The out of school children enjoy participating in a wide variety of activities, for example, cooking, creative activities, construction and role play. Topics are planned for older children during the school holidays; for example in February half term week the topic was 'mini beasts' and 'ZooLab' were invited in to share a variety of insects and reptiles with the children. Children enjoy playing outdoors during the first part of the session where they can let off steam and participate in physical exercise. A group of children particularly enjoyed playing on skateboards, where they continuously went down a small sloped pathway in pairs. The latter part of the session is for quieter activities where children have the opportunity to participate in traditional board games such as Monopoly and Scrabble, encouraging children to co-operate and to understand the rules of games. The organisation of the out of school club allows children to make choices from resources that are provided at their level and independently access from what is on offer.

### Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a very good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage, early childhood development and how children play and learn. An effective key person system is used successfully to ensure that children's individual abilities are identified and respected. Children's observation and assessment records contain good levels of information. Planning records show that children receive regular opportunities to develop their learning in all areas, whilst the assessment procedures ensure that the key person monitors development on a weekly basis. Staff members are successful in providing children with a good range of activities that are interesting and stimulating, ensuring their interest is captured and successfully maintained. Activities and play experiences are varied providing children with effective play and learning experiences supporting their overall developmental progress. Sessions are organised for free-play with an emphasis on children's choice. Circle activities are planned, for example for registration and story times. Children clearly enjoy their time at the nursery, however on occasions children's learning is limited as teaching methods used by staff are not always fully extended.

Children are developing good attitudes and dispositions towards their learning and the older and more able children are keen to complete tasks such as a painting activity; one child stating that they had made a 'bad monster'. They enjoy participating in a good range of activities provided and are encouraged to independently select resources and initiate their own activities and games. Children show a secure sense of belonging as they greet staff and each other upon arrival. They work very well together in a purposeful manner and understand the importance of co-operation during group activities. For example, children sharing and taking turns with the pirate game. Children are confident speakers, using words effectively and a range of vocabulary to convey their experiences both real and imaginary including family experiences, for example one child talking about 'going swimming with my mummy'. The book corner is very warm, welcoming and comfortable for children to use. They are confident and enjoy looking at books with either their friends or the staff. Children confidently use tools and resources to make marks and they have opportunities to recognise and write their own names independently through daily routines such as self-registration. Problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy is suitably promoted through daily routines such as singing number rhymes and counting how many children are present. Children have opportunities to create three-dimensional structures, they particularly enjoyed making a fire engine, where they practised rolling the wheels. The good range of resources, for example measuring scales, Compare Bears, gradient puzzles,

sequencing and matching games help children to consolidate and extend their learning. Older and more able children count up to ten and beyond confidently. Cooking, sand and water activities provide children with good experiences of weight, size and capacity.

Children have opportunities to find out about the natural world through topics such as mini beasts and growing flowers. They go on trips out into the community, for example, nature walks and trips to the local shops and library. People are also invited into the nursery to talk about their work including the 'ZooLab'. Children are developing a good awareness of the uses of information technology in everyday life and are able to operate equipment, for example, domestic items, the computer and magnetic activities. Their imaginations and free expression are effectively promoted through the range of activities such as play dough, painting, soil, water, sand, role play, craft activities and music and movement. Role play is linked into current topics and themes such as the restaurant. Children enjoy music and movement, using musical instruments freely to experiment with rhythm and sound patterns. Their physical skills are effectively promoted through a variety of mediums, for example, the balancing beams, scooters, tricycles, ball and hoops. Children's finer manipulative skills are successfully promoted through the good range of activities such as threading, puzzles, building with small bricks and mark-making tools. As a result they are making good progress in all areas of their physical development.

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

The provision is good.

Children benefit from having access to a range of play resources which promote positive images of diversity and they participate in activities which promote their awareness of different festivals and cultures, for example, Christmas, Chinese New Year, Mother's day and planned topics including 'Countries Around The World'. Children work harmoniously with others as staff create an environment that values positive behaviour. Children's understanding of right and wrong are developed as they respond to gentle reminders to care for their environment, resources and each other. Staff provide good role models for children by being calm and polite and they always listen to children's views and wishes and respond to their concerns sensitively, for example, one child wanting to set up the lunch table with a staff member. Praise and encouragement are given freely to children, ensuring that they develop confidence and self-esteem and understand that they have done well.

Children are cared for by staff who work closely with parents to meet individual children's needs. They enjoy good relationships with staff, building on their well-being and confidence. Each child is valued and respected as an individual as staff know the children's individual personalities well. A comprehensive policy is in place regarding children with learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities which details how the service will be provided to children. The good levels of support ensure that all children are included and receive a great deal of individual attention so that their needs are effectively met. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are fully informed about the provision the nursery offers and how their children are progressing. Parents are welcomed into the nursery at any time to help their children to settle or to talk to staff about any concerns they may have. Parents also receive regular newsletters which keep them up to date with activities and events, for example, sport and beach days. Children's learning is encouraged in the home through children bringing in objects, however this could be further developed to ensure continued support for children's learning in the home. Regular meetings are arranged with parents to

discuss their child's developmental progress, ensuring that parents are fully informed about all aspects of their child's care and development.

Parents are aware of how to make complaints about the provision and these are dealt with in a prompt and professional way. Staff listen to parents' concerns and where appropriate, adapt their policies and procedures accordingly.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by staff who have been checked through the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and complete health declarations to further confirm their suitability. This ensures that all staff working with children are suitable and have relevant training and experience. The use of available space within the nursery is effectively organised, with clear designated areas for play, storage, food preparation, changing and eating. These areas are effectively managed by staff to allow children to play, eat and rest safely and securely.

Children are provided with a good level of care, supported and enhanced by the clear policies developed and implemented by the nursery. These ensure that staff are consistent in their interactions with children and in their regard for safety and security. Records and details relating to staff and children are obtained, recorded and stored appropriately, ensuring that the nursery is meeting legal requirements relating to the National Standards. However, formal systems with regard to the monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the provision of the nursery has not yet been implemented. Consequently, the nursery may not effectively respond to the changing needs of the children and nursery.

The leadership and management of the nursery is good. The registered provider, managers and staff are committed, enthusiastic and professional in their approach to providing children with positive early years play experiences and learning. They have a good understanding of the importance of early childhood development and they work hard to consistently provide good care for all children. Staff have clearly identified roles and responsibilities such as health and safety, safeguarding and children's individual and additional needs and they carry out their roles effectively. Staff induction and appraisals ensure that new and existing staff feel fully supported and valued in their role. They are deployed successfully within the nursery and staffing ratios are maintained throughout the day ensuring children are well supervised and supported during activities. Staff have a good understanding of the policies and procedures which are in place. Consequently, children are cared for by knowledgeable, experienced staff and they benefit from very good continuity of care.

Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection the group agreed; to further promote equality of opportunity by ensuring that children have an appropriate range of activities and resources to reflect culture and disabilities. The group have obtained a range of equipment and play resources to ensure diversity is actively promoted within the provision. As a result, good progress has been made with regard to equal opportunities.

Nursery education, not applicable.

## **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 further outdoor play activities
- devise a formal system of reviewing, monitoring and evaluating the nursery provision.

#### **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):

- extend further the range of teaching methods used by staff
- develop further children's learning in the home.

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)