

Rocking Horse Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY392107
Inspection date	15/09/2009
Inspector	Patricia Webb
Setting address	Bromford Road, Birmingham, B36 8EY
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

Rocking Horse Kindergarten has been registered under the current private ownership since 2009. It is part of a small chain of settings and is sited within the campus of Hodge Hill Girls School in Birmingham. It operates from a purpose-built building with easy access for all and fully enclosed accessible outdoor play areas laid out to decking, tarmac and grass. The kindergarten is open each weekday from 7.30 am to 6.00 pm throughout the year.

The kindergarten is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 98 children may attend the kindergarten at any one time. There are currently 91 children on roll in the early years age range. Planned provision for older children is registered by Ofsted on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children from families where English is an additional language.

There are 12 members of staff working directly with the children, all of whom are qualified to at least Level 2 with some staff holding relevant degrees. Additional housekeeping staff are employed with a bank of staff available for emergency cover when necessary. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is inadequate.

The owner and the manager are working to develop the vision for the kindergarten with policies and procedures in place to promote continuous improvement. Some children in the setting are making sound progress in their development and learning supported by friendly qualified staff. However, the systems for obtaining information on children's family backgrounds and individual needs are not always consistently applied and some legally required information regarding children's health and safety has not been recorded. Partnerships with other providers of EYFS are developing positively.

Overall, the early years provision requires significant improvement. The registered person is given a Notice to Improve that sets out actions to be carried out.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To comply with the requirements of the EYFS the registered person must take the following action by the specified date:

- improve staff knowledge of child protection issues, ensuring that all members of staff understand the safeguarding policy and are confident in implementing the procedures therein (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare) 02/11/2009

- request written permission from all parents for the seeking of any necessary emergency medical treatment or advice in the future (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare) 02/11/2009
- review the risk assessments to effectively identify and minimise hazards to children with specific regard to the patio doors and some equipment used in displays (Suitable premises, environment and equipment; also applies to both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register) 02/11/2009
- review the systems for obtaining significant information from parents to ensure that every child receives an enjoyable and challenging learning and development experience tailored to meet their individual needs (Organisation). 02/11/2009

To improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- develop the process of observation and assessment to ensure that the records are purposeful and systematic in planning for next steps in children's learning and development
- explore ways of reducing the noise levels in some areas of the building to offer a more ambient environment, including developing staff knowledge of employing tactics to bring down noise levels
- utilise staff skills to improve effective communication and ensure all children and their families become actively involved in their child's learning and development thereby improving inclusive practice in the setting.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

An action plan is in place to develop the provision and the process for evaluating the quality of the provision is in progress. Attention is being given to team building and staff training although this is taking time to establish due to limited places on relevant courses. Whilst some senior staff have a sound knowledge of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures for protecting children, some staff have a limited understanding of the signs and symptoms that might give cause for concern and are unsure of the procedures to be followed should an allegation of abuse be made against a member of staff. This has the potential to hinder how swiftly any such concerns may be identified and acted upon in the best interest of the child. Risk assessments are carried out although staff are not always alert to evaluating risks. The assessments do not always cover some hazards such as the children operating the patio doors and a display where for example, a rope light arrangement droops down within the reach of toddlers and is not fully secured to prevent them pulling it down.

There is effective deployment of resources and equipment in the setting. Each care base is well-resourced and set out to offer children ready opportunities to access their self chosen toys, games and activities. This develops independence, critical

thinking and encourages physical development for many of the babies and younger children as they hone their crawling and early walking skills purposefully. This applies equally for both indoor and outdoor facilities which are freely available. Effective partnerships are being developed between the kindergarten and the local school which is the main feeder school for the setting. Reciprocal visits are being undertaken to share practice and the ways in which children are attaining in the EYFS.

The kindergarten serves a very diverse community and the staff team reflects this with some practitioners having skills in both verbal and non-verbal communication. However these skills are not always used consistently to ensure that individual children's needs are addressed. This applies in particular to the recording of children's background information following discussions with parents prior to the children starting in the setting. As a result, some key workers have insufficient information about a children in their group to enable them to make suitable arrangements for settling a child into the kindergarten with the least distress when separating from their parents.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Staff understand the EYFS and planning is flexible to take account of some children's interests, abilities and stages of development. A recent review of planning for the younger children in the setting has resulted in more individual-based planning being prepared rather than using topic-based themes. However, some records of observation and assessment are not always purposeful and at times the next steps planned are too vague to effectively indicate how staff are seeking to promote development. The learning journey format has been introduced and staff are working to develop these to share children's progress with parents. There is also a system for recording daily activities and routines in individual books and some parents have used these to exchange information that staff find helpful in understanding children's characters and family constructs. However, the use of both of these records is inconsistent as staff are at times, not wholly aware of a child's home language, stage of ability, dietary requirements or how to enable a child to settle during their early attendance in the setting. Due to this, some children find the separation from parents difficult and become distressed.

The layout of the premises allows for children to manoeuvre around, indoors and outside with confidence as they make choices about where they play. They access the resources easily and seek out adult support when required. The construct of the building offers a bright and well-ventilated environment although in some areas the noise levels can become very high impairing children's enjoyment and disturbing the ambience. The management are aware of this and have begun to seek appropriate solutions to address this. The outdoor space offers a range of surfaces and physical activities as the learning opportunities are offered outside as well as indoors. Toddlers delight in having a 'race' learning to wait for the directions of 'ready, steady, go' and then running with gusto across the grass. The covered dome offers shade and an interesting space as babies and toddlers

explore the rockers and wheeled toys safe from the direct sun.

Older, established children show skill and dexterity as they work on the computer, using the mouse deftly and working collaboratively on some games. One child is engrossed in developing an awareness of sequencing and repeated patterns selecting the next colour brick to be moved to the frame on the game with minimal support from the adult. There is a wealth of numbers and letters displayed around the setting and some older, more confident children are able to 'write' their shopping list, create menus and recognise their name cards as they self register. They use numbers in their everyday routines as they remind their friends about how many children can be at the water tray at any one time and learn about shapes and compare actual items to flat shapes such as the sphere being a circle. They explore their environment, considering why the ice has melted and babies delight in handling the gloop, squeezing it through their fingers and liberally sharing their experience with the adults. For some of the more recent children attending, this level of involvement is not yet established and is hindered by staff not knowing some key background information. Some staff are aware of using a variety of strategies for developing wholly inclusive practice such as the use of symbols and pictures and obtaining key words and phrases in a child's home language. However, these are not yet used consistently enough to be wholly effective when meeting individual needs fully.

Routines for reducing the risk of the spread of infection are implemented by staff who don the appropriate protective aprons when attending to certain tasks as required. Children are encouraged to follow effective personal care routines to keep healthy. Accident and medication records are completed and shared with parents. Written parental permission for seeking emergency medical treatment or advice has not been sought from all parents and this hinders how parents can request additional arrangements if necessary, potentially compromising children's well-being. Meals are cooked and prepared on the premises and children enjoy the social time to be had when seated together with adult support. Babies' feeding and sleep routines are discussed with parents and staff work to ensure that planning is flexible to take account of these.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	4
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	4

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	4
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding	4
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	4

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	4
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	4
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:

Not Met (with actions)

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:

Not Met (with actions)

The registered provider does not meet the requirements of the compulsory and or voluntary part/s of the Childcare Register.

To comply with the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- take action as specified in the early years section of the report (Suitability and safety of premises and equipment). 02/11/2009

To comply with the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- take action as specified in the early years section of the report (Suitability and safety of premises and equipment). 02/11/2009