



Rhymes Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY303072
Inspection date	28 November 2005
Inspector	Gill Thornton

Setting Address	Rhymes Nursery, 2 Hawker Drive, Martlesham Heath, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP5 3RQ
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Telephone number

E-mail

Registered person	Little Joe Ltd trading as Rhymes Nursery
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Type of inspection	Integrated
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Type of care	Full day care
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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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Rhymes Nursery at Martlesham is one of seven nurseries/childcare provisions run by Little Joe Ltd. It opened in 1993 and operates from a converted engine shed situated in an industrial area on the outskirts of Ipswich. A maximum of 44 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 69 children aged from 3 months to 8 years on roll. Of these 23 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area, as many parents travel to work in the locality.

The nursery employs 20 staff. 14 of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. 2 staff are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's dietary needs are met through the provision of nutritious meals and snacks that take account of their individual dietary needs and preferences. Meals are freshly prepared on the premises by a qualified cook, who ensures all children, including the babies enjoy fresh fruit and vegetables each day. Children enjoy a varied menu, toast and cereal are available for breakfast for those who require it and lunchtime is a social occasion where children enjoy favourites such as shepherds pie and vegetables or ratatouille and rice. Tea comprises of food such as vegetable soup or home made sausage rolls with vegetable crudités and dips which are particularly popular with the children.

Children's health is maintained because information is requested from parents on any allergies and dietary requirements and sound procedures are in place to ensure that these are complied with. Babies and the youngest toddlers take their meals in their own rooms and food is adapted to suit their individual requirements, for example, fruit and vegetables are pureed for babies.

Children's health is promoted because staff are aware of and follow sound policies and procedures in line with environmental health guidelines. For example, staff follow stringent procedures during nappy changing and the group encourage and supports the use of real nappies. The employment of a cleaner and implementation of cleaning rotas ensures the premises are clean and hygienic. Children learn the importance of simple health and hygiene practices through the routines of the provision. For example, they help staff to clean the tables before meals and take part in activities which help them gain an understanding of washing their hands thoroughly to remove germs. However, children eat their snack directly off the table in the same place as other children have already been eating, so putting them at a possible risk of cross infection.

Children receive appropriate care if they are ill or have an accident because all staff attend first aid training as part of their induction and they are vigilant in following the correct procedures for recording and administering medication and recording accidents. Children's well-being is promoted because staff are aware of children's individual health care needs and all the required documentation and consents are in place to support this.

Children enjoy a range of physical activities that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They have daily access to the outdoor area, which has a separate area for the younger

age groups, where they can run, climb and pedal on the safety surfaced play area. Children enjoy physical challenge in the ball pool and take part in games to help them develop control of their bodies, for example, the 'traffic light game'. Babies are encouraged to practise and demonstrate their physical abilities by staff, for example, encouraging them to climb on soft play shapes.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure indoor and outdoor environment where stringent measures are in place to monitor the entrance to the nursery to prevent unauthorised access. Each playroom is well-organised and equipped with appropriate furniture, for example, very low tables and captains chairs with harnesses for the youngest toddlers. Children's risk of accidental injury is minimised because thorough procedures are in place to ensure health and safety guidelines are followed and detailed risk assessments are carried out in each room.

Children learn about keeping safe through planned activities such as road safety awareness and reminders by staff not to climb on furniture in case they fall and hurt themselves. Children use safe and suitable toys and equipment which are well maintained and cleaned regularly. Staff supervise children's play to promote their safety, especially in the ball pool, however the room containing the ball pool is cramped because it is used to store other resources. Children are kept safe on outings because clear procedures are followed and separate risk assessments are carried out to identify any possible hazards.

Children can move around freely and safely within their own areas of the provision. For example, stair gates are used as required to minimise children's risk of accidental injury on the stairs. Emergency evacuations are practised regularly with the children to promote their safety in the event of a fire. Children's welfare is safeguarded because all staff attend child protection training as part of their induction and know the correct procedures to follow if they have a concern.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Most children separate happily from their parents or are supported by staff to do so in the welcoming and child friendly environment. All children make positive relationships with staff and their peers and spend the majority of their time playing together purposefully. Children are encouraged by staff to develop pride in their achievements, for example, while helping a baby to practise their walking skills exclaiming 'look what you can do'.

The development of children aged under three is promoted by use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework which staff use to plan a range of appropriate activities within each aspect. For example, encouraging imaginative opportunities for all children, including the babies to explore materials such as ice and crazy soap. Young

children are helped to develop secure and trusting relationships by staff's interaction with them and their parents. For example, encouraging babies to wave 'bye-bye' to their parents. Staff know the children well as individuals so they are able to support their varying needs, such as adapting the environment to take account of a child that becomes upset if he wakes to find himself on his own.

Children aged up to two are cared for within two clean and comfortable rooms, where they develop their confidence when exploring resources and play opportunities through knowing that an adult is close by, ready to offer help and support as needed.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

Children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. Senior staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and use this to plan a balanced range of activities to support children's learning. Medium term plans are thorough and show links between the Foundation Stage and 'Birth to three' to take account of the mixed age group within the main room. Weekly learning intentions are identified for each area of learning and include daily resources to support each area. Adult focused activities identify appropriate stepping stones and show differentiation, but usually only for the younger children. Consequently, older or more able children are not always offered appropriate challenges during planned activities.

Children's progress through the stepping stones is monitored in their Step by Step records of progress. However, these are not formally used to plan children's next step in learning, although the group have identified the use of observations as an area for development. Most staff show an interest in what children do and senior staff respond to their questions to promote their learning and understanding. For example, when following children's interest in a guitar and helping them play and tune it. However, less experienced staff do not always have the skills to offer appropriate challenges to help children follow their own interests to extend their learning.

Most children are beginning to display good levels of involvement, especially in circle time activities. However, there are limited opportunities throughout the day for children to spend extended periods of time at an activity of their own choosing, because the routines of the setting involve moving around different rooms within the premises. Children are learning to share and take turns and respond to each others needs, for example, a boy who sat next to his friend 'because it makes him happy if I sit here'.

Older children attempt to write their own names and they are sometimes encouraged by staff to name their own work. All children join in with the letter of the week whole group activity and take pride in attempting to write the letter on the blackboard. Children take part in activities to clap out a rhythm. However, linking sounds to letters features rarely on plans and only some staff place emphasis on the sounds of letters. All children enjoy accessing and sharing books on their own or with members of staff.

Children use mathematical language in their play and can recognise and identify shapes. They practise their counting skills during games and have some opportunity to take part in simple calculations during everyday routines, such as counting how many cups are needed at snacktime.

Children enjoy using the computer on a regular basis and develop their knowledge of everyday technology using remote controlled toys. They have opportunities to explore and investigate materials and enjoy demonstrating their skills using various construction kits. Children develop a sense of time and place through themes such as 'All about me'. All children have good opportunities to take part in a range of physical activities and learn about keeping healthy.

Children enjoy joining in with their favourite songs, respond to music and have opportunities to use musical instruments. They become engrossed in exploring their creativity through free access to a trolley containing a wide range of media and materials, for example, when working together with large sheets of papers exploring glue, glitter and collage resources. The group are in the process of improving the role play area with the use of prop boxes to support children's imaginative play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed into the setting and are valued by staff who respect their individuality. They develop a sense of belonging because settling in procedures help to ensure children are familiar with the staff and routines of the provision. They have named coat pegs which show their photographs and staff ensure their personal belongings and comforters are safe, yet close by if children need them.

Children are beginning to understand responsible behaviour through consistent strategies used by staff to take account of individual children's stages of development. Most children behave well or are reminded of the rules of expected behaviour by staff. Children are able to make choices and decisions from child accessible storage within each room. At set times during the day children in the main room choose whether to play inside or out.

Children become aware of wider society through outings into the local community and access to resources such as books and puzzles promoting a positive view of diversity. They celebrate various festivals such as Chinese New Year. In addition they recognise children's own faiths, for example, including a Hannukah song in Christmas celebrations. Clear processes are in place to identify and support children's specific needs and adaptations are made to ensure children can access all relevant activities.

Partnership with parents and carers is good.

Good information sharing ensures that children are cared for according to their parents wishes. Parents receive detailed information including copies of relevant policies and procedures which includes information on the Foundation Stage and 'Birth to three matters'. Children's progress is shared at annual parents' evenings and the group has recently started sending home sections from their children's profiles for parents' comments. Parents feel the nursery is very friendly and supportive of families.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The organisation of space and resources supports children's care, learning and play. Staff in each room are careful to ensure that adult:child ratios are maintained. However, sometimes on busy days staff are pre-occupied dealing with domestic tasks and covering lunch breaks to give children their full attention. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures are in place to ensure children are cared for by suitable and qualified staff with a knowledge and understanding of child development.

Leadership and management is good.

Children benefit from the strong leadership and management of the nursery. Staff have clear job descriptions and an appraisal system identifies areas for professional development. All staff regularly attend workshops to improve their practice. Staff work well together as a team and are aware of each others roles and responsibilities. Regular staff meetings and support from the Early Education Support Team helps the group evaluate the effectiveness of the provision of nursery education. The group recognise the potential difficulties in having mixed ages in the main room where nursery education is provided and are acting upon advice from their support teacher to improve the learning environment.

Overall, the needs of the children that attend the provision are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

This is the groups first care inspection since the group was re-registered.

At their last nursery education inspection the provider was asked to improve planning to provide a balance of activities across each area of learning. Planning is now thorough and reflects each aspect within the areas of learning through identified learning intentions in short term plans. However, linking sounds and letters does not feature as regularly as other aspects. The group also agreed to introduce a rigorous system to monitor and evaluate the quality of learning. This is in the process of being implemented by the use of peer monitoring and looking at children's development and progress using their profiles. Meetings with Foundation Stage staff to evaluate and discuss strengths and weaknesses of teaching have not yet taken place as regularly as the group initially intended.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration. 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.

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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):

- improve hygiene practises at snacktime with regard to children eating directly off the table

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):

- provide children with regular opportunities to link sounds and letters
- adapt activities to meet the needs of more able children to provide them with sufficient challenges and opportunities to follow their own interests and extend their learning
- develop observation procedures to ensure these are used effectively to plan the next steps in learning for individual children.

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