



Rainbow Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	203441
Inspection date	23 February 2006
Inspector	Lynn Amelia Hartigan
Setting Address	Methodist Church Hall, Nayland Road, Mile End, Colchester, Essex, CO4 5ET
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Registered person	Rainbow Playgroup Committee
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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

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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?

Rainbow Playgroup opened in 1990 and operates from the Methodist Church Hall in Mile End, Colchester. A maximum of 24 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday from 09.30 to 12.00 on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, offering a lunch club for older children on Wednesday and Thursday. The group runs a session on a Tuesday at 12.15 until 14.45 during term time. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play

area.

There are currently 40 children aged from 2 years to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 17 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local catchment area and wider community. The playgroup currently supports children with special educational needs and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs 7 staff 5 of whom, including the supervisor, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy as they are encouraged and praised when using the bathroom, most can manage this independently. They are encouraged to wash their hands before snacks, lunch and after using the toilet. Young children benefit from a good nappy changing procedure.

Children are further protected from illness as the staff promote well documented policies regarding illness, medication and accidents. In addition several staff are fully trained in first aid. A good daily risk assessment and cleaning programme helps minimise accidents and cross infection.

Children are offered a choice of healthy snacks and drinks, for example they enjoy crackers, cheese or fruit for snack. Drinking water is available throughout the session and children are able to pour their drinks with confidence and accuracy. Some children stay for lunch club. Staff encourage children to think about what food is good for their bodies and encourage healthy options.

Children move around indoors carefully as the room is set out well. Good opportunities for small physical development such as mark making, dough, gloop, dressing up and cutting activities are readily available and well used. However, children have limited opportunity for outdoor play, fresh air and daily physical exercise as outdoor play is not always included within the planning. The enclosed outdoor area is used well during the warmer weather.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are welcomed into a bright, attractive room that is clean and well maintained. Children's art work and posters create a welcoming environment. Specified areas are clearly defined such as the book corner, craft and creative area. The children are secure and settle well within the setting.

Children's safety is considered as a priority by staff. Children are kept safe as staff carry out good risk assessments and regular fire drills with the children. Vigilant management of the entrance doors by staff ensures children cannot leave the premises unseen. However, children's safety could be compromised as low level glazing in the entrance doors does not appear to meet safety standards and a large carpet used in the home corner is a potential trip hazard.

Children are able to choose from a good range of toys and play equipment that has been set out for them. All toys and resources are well maintained and of good quality.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as the staff have a secure understanding of child protection. All required procedures and documents are in place to promote this.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are busy, play happily and are enthusiastic as the sessions are well planned and designed to help them have fun and make progress in their learning and development. They have formed warm relationships with the staff who interact very well with the children.

Children are encouraged to initiate their own play. Well supported adult led activities are also offered. Annual trips such as a visit to the seaside or the zoo are planned and enjoyed by both the children and their parents. Dressing up is a popular activity and children are able to dress themselves. They enjoy using the hats, shoes, bags and sunglasses to accessorise their outfits. Younger children are managed well by staff who have received some training on how to support and develop the under 3s. However, younger children will benefit from a quiet, soft and cosy area where they can relax if they feel tired.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. Children are busy, eager to learn and concentrate well on tasks and activities. Staff observe children and record their progress however, this information could be used more effectively to inform the next steps of learning for the children.

Some very good quality resources such as a well stocked book corner, dressing up and props, home corner, construction kits and musical instruments are available to support the children's creativity and imagination. Although staff are happy to provide resources on request, these are not easily accessible for the children to independently choose to extend and support their play.

Children's listening and mathematical skills are effectively developed as well planned activities, such as interactive stories, group music time, singing familiar number rhyming songs, weighing fruits and play foods are enjoyed with enthusiasm and concentration. Children show great interest in the book corner. They are aware that the text has meaning and handle books correctly and with respect. They share and

enjoy stories together and staff are on hand to read to the children when requested.

Good construction kits encourage children to investigate, build, design and solve problems. Children have great fun using large cardboard boxes to build with and play in. Children enjoy using magnifying glasses and plastic insects indoors however, children are not always able to explore real experiences such as weather, creatures in their natural environment and plants or have opportunities for large physical play as outdoor activities and playtime is restricted.

Children's learning with regard to different cultures and religions is developing. Acknowledgement of different cultural festivals and traditional days are included within the plans and celebrated. For example, the playgroup have recently celebrated the Chinese New Year. This promotes children's learning and respect for others and their beliefs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have an understanding of the needs and feelings of others and gain an insight into world cultures as they celebrate festivals and cultural events that are planned within the curriculum such as, Diwali and Christmas.

Children have access to resources such as dressing up clothes, puzzles, dolls, and a very good selection of books and posters displayed are used to provide children with diverse and positive images. A good system is in place to support any additional needs of a child and staff have attended training with regard to special needs. Staff are sensitive, patient and discreet when managing children's individual needs.

Children respond well to the staff's high expectations of behaviour and the adults are very good role models. Children develop self-esteem and respect for others by learning social skills for example, sharing fruit and taking turns when solving a puzzle and sharing toys. Staff in turn give ample praise and encouragement. Children have formed friendships, for example they cooperate well with each other at tidy up time and apologise and hug each other if they have upset their friend.

Children are happy and secure in their surroundings. Children's individual needs are met as there is good communication with parents. A complaints policy is available for parents however, this needs to be reviewed and updated as there are inaccuracies within the document. Parents speak positively about all aspects of the playgroup.

Partnership with parents and carers is good.

Children benefit from a strong emphasis on effective partnerships with parents. Parents are kept informed of events and dates by way of regular newsletters and notices displayed on the parents' notice board. They are invited and welcomed into the nursery by friendly, approachable staff. New parents are encouraged to stay and settle their child. A parents' rota is in place and well supported.

Informal chats each day between parents and staff allow for the exchange of useful

information to help children's progress and development. Records are confidentially stored and available to parents at all times and parents are encouraged to contribute to the records. An annual children's development report is also provided.

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

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from being cared for by qualified staff. They feel secure and settled through the use of appropriate staffing ratios and the environment is organised so that they feel comfortable and settled. Effective recruitment and vetting procedures now in place ensure that children are well protected and cared for by staff with a knowledge and understanding of child development.

Children's safety, enjoyment, health and achievements are supported by the policies and procedures within the operational plan. Documents to ensure the smooth running of the nursery are maintained and promote the children's welfare, care and learning.

The leadership and management is satisfactory.

Children benefit from a team who work well together. Through ongoing staff development and training the children are achieving well. The supervisor delegates some responsibilities and the staff feel valued. There now is a good induction programme and appraisal system in place. Training is positively encouraged and staff feel supported and are committed to their own personal development. The supervisor has good communication and support of the committee.

Children benefit as the supervisor is enthusiastic, reflective and forward thinking. The supervisor is able to identify the playgroup's strengths and weakness and plans are in place that will further develop the group. Annual questionnaires sent to parents assist in how to develop the group further. Links with outside agencies and professionals ensure an inclusive environment is promoted.

Overall, the needs of the children are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to review the operational plan to include an induction programme for staff and students, procedures for outings, sick and lost children and how staff will be deployed throughout the playgroup. The operational plan has recently been reviewed and updated and now includes the policies required. A further requirement was to ensure the child protection policy complied with the local Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC). This policy has been reviewed, updated and includes the procedure should an allegation of abuse be made against a member of staff.

The provider was also asked to ensure the arrangements for registration identified

when a child or staff member arrived and departed and record any visitors. Children now self register, staff record the children's arrival and time of departure within the main register and a visitors book is available.

The provider was also required to plan appropriate activities to support and develop the children's learning. To continue to develop planning and assessment procedures and to provide opportunities for parents to participate in their children's record keeping and progress. Appropriate plans are now in place following training for all staff on the Foundation Stage and observations. This is ongoing as more training is planned in April and short-term planning is being reviewed. Parents are actively welcomed into the playgroup by way of a parents' rota. Children's key workers report directly to parents regarding their child's progress. Diaries are in place for younger children and written reports are issued annually.

Complaints since the last inspection

Ofsted received a complaint raising concerns about National Standards 11 (behaviour management) and 13 (child protection). Ofsted conducted a visit to the provision. Upon investigation Ofsted found no evidence to substantiate the allegations. However, the provider was issued with actions under National Standard 2 (organisation) and standard 13 (child protection). The provider was asked to develop an action plan on how new members of staff would complete an induction programme and ensure all staff are aware of the child protection policies and procedures. Ofsted received a satisfactory response to the action.

Ofsted is satisfied that the provider has taken appropriate action to address the concerns raised and they remain qualified for registration.

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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):

- review and update the complaints policy and ensure a complaints file is in place in line with the changes to National Standard 12

- ensure any potential hazards are made safe or inaccessible to children (this refers to low level glazing and carpet within the playroom). Provide a cosy quiet area, accessible for younger children to use, should they feel tired.

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 opportunities for children to use and access all resources available to them. This should include the indoor and outdoor accommodation to support children in all six areas of learning.
- ensure plans sufficiently link with the children's development records, so that they can progress in their next steps of development and learning.

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