



Office for Standards  
in Education

## COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 221733

DfES Number: 514085

### INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 24/11/2003  
Inspector Name Susan Patricia Foulger

### SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care, Sessional Day Care  
Setting Name Witchford Rackham Pre-School  
Setting Address Witchford Rackham Primary School, 83 Main Street  
Witchford  
Ely  
Cambridgeshire  
CB6 2HQ

### REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Witchford Rackham Playgroup 803398

### ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Witchford Rackham Playgroup  
Address Pre-School House  
Witchford Rackham School, Main Street  
Ely  
Cambridgeshire  
CB6 2HQ

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

### Information about the setting

Witchford Rackham Pre-School opened over twenty five years ago. It operates from the ground floor of a two storey house, dedicated to the Pre-School, located within the grounds of the Rackham Primary school in Witchford. It serves the local area.

There are currently 44 children from two to four years on roll. This includes eleven funded 3 year olds and six funded 4 year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting is able to support children with special needs. There are no children attending who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.05a.m to 11.45a.m and the group currently offers afternoon sessions on Mondays and Wednesdays from 12.45p.m to 15.20 p.m. Further afternoon sessions are to be offered next term.

Following a period of many staff changes a new playleader has been appointed for January 2004. There are five other staff members working with the children. Only one of these has an early years qualification to NVQ level 3. However, three of the staff are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from a mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

### How good is the Day Care?

Witchford Rackham Pre-School provides satisfactory care for children aged two to five years.

The new staff team are committed to training and developing their practice and are supported by an enthusiastic committee. A good adult: child ratio is maintained through regular staffing and the use of parent helpers. Staff deployment is generally good and children are secure in the routines but the organization of snack time needs reviewing. Record keeping systems are in place but policies and procedures need to be reviewed and updated in line with current guidelines.

A warm and welcoming environment is provided for parents and children. The premises are safe, clean, attractively decorated and used effectively to provide a broad range of age-appropriate activities which promote children's development. These are supported with toys and resources, some of which reflect diversity.

Staff have a good awareness of keeping children safe and encourage children to adopt good hygiene practices. However, regular risk assessments need to be undertaken. Staff support children with special needs well. Praise and encouragement are used effectively to reinforce good behaviour.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents have informal opportunities to share information with staff and they feel involved in the group through taking a turn as a parent helper and by regular newsletters. The committee have been canvassing parent's views on further improvements they would like and intend to act on suggestions made.

#### **What has improved since the last inspection?**

At the last inspection the provider agreed to ensure that all staff had completed clearance checks, that individual staff records were comprehensive and kept on the premises and that parents were provided with information about staffing roles. All staff are now cleared, their confidential records kept in a locked first floor cupboard and details of their roles explained in the prospectus which all new parents receive. These details are also included in the operational plan which has been developed. As a result parents are well informed about staffing and issues pertaining to the group.

The provider also agreed to develop an Action plan regarding staff training and qualifications. In the last year there have been many staff changes. A new deputy playleader (level 3) and two assistants started work at the Pre-school in September 2003 and a new playleader (level 3) is due to take up her post in January 2004. The two new assistants and an existing assistant have just started NVQ level 3 training so training needs are being addressed.

The provider also agreed to conduct a risk assessment on the premises. This was done in December 2002 and a health and safety officer was appointed from the committee. However further risk assessments are not recorded and regular risk assessments need to be undertaken to ensure the premises remain safe and in a good state of repair.

It was also agreed that regular opportunities would be provided for parents and staff to exchange information. This has greatly improved. Parents report that they can speak to the staff informally and new initiatives such as the home-school book and an open evening will help parents to feel more informed and involved in their child's learning.

#### **What is being done well?**

- The rooms are organized well to provide a good range of activities which

promote all areas of children's development. Good use is made of the outside area for physical play opportunities whenever weather permits.

- Staff use praise and encouragement effectively to foster children's self-esteem and confidence. Children help to pack away after activities and are learning to share and take turns.
- The staff and committee maintain close links to the Primary school. This helps to ensure that appropriate information sharing takes place and that the children's transition from pre-school to school is made easily.
- The committee and staff are making considerable efforts to further improve information sharing with parents through the introduction of home-school books, an open evening and parents questionnaires. Parents are supportive of the new staff team.

#### **What needs to be improved?**

- policies on lost and uncollected children, administration of medicines and outings procedures to be put in place. Prospectus details, existing policies and procedures need to be reviewed, amended where necessary and shared with parents and staff.
- the implementation of regular recorded risk assessments
- the organization of snack time and staff's room awareness.
- staff knowledge of equal opportunities and the development of resources which reflect positive images of culture, ethnicity, gender and disability.

#### **Outcome of the inspection**

Satisfactory

#### **CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION**

*All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.*

*As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.*

#### **WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?**

#### **The Registered Person must take the following actions by the date shown**

Std	Action	Date
14	Ensure that policies are in place for lost and uncollected children and administration of	01/03/2004

	medicines. Review and update other policies and procedures and share these with staff and parents.	
--	--	--

<b>The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection</b>	
<b>Std</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2	review the organization of snack time and ensure that staff are deployed effectively during free play sessions.
6	ensure that regular risk assessments are undertaken and recorded.
9	ensure that equal opportunities knowledge is improved and resources which reflect positive images of culture, ethnicity, gender and disability are developed.

## INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

### How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at Witchford Rackham Pre-school is generally good. The range of activities is broadly appropriate for children's age and stage of development and the children are making reasonable progress towards the early learning goals although planning is not always effective. Staff are confident in their handling of the children and appropriate measures are in place for behaviour management. Children are taught using appropriate methods. Staff help children to share, take turns and co-operate within a group. Learning is firmly based on play and real life experience. However, staff are rarely giving the children opportunity to extend their vocabulary. Children are not being asked open ended questions and they are not being challenged to encourage them to think, learn and expand their knowledge.

Problems with staffing over the last year, means that management is not always effective. The staff and new appointees have made efforts to keep the standards up. A deputy manager who started at the beginning of the September term and a new leader has just been appointed to start in January. Three of the staff are just beginning an NVQ 3 course in child care. All the staff are to be commended for the efforts they are making.

The new committee is keen to bring all the policies and procedures up to date and are planning for increased communication between the group and parents. The children are happy and settled in the pre-school and parents approve of the increased pre-school educational structure in the sessions. Relationships between staff and parents are open and friendly; newsletters, information about activities and the policy document is given to all parents They are invited to help at the pre-school once a term so have an understanding of the routines and the range of activities the children are offered. The pre-school do not give parents any written reports on the progress of their child.

### What is being done well?

- Staff help children to share, take turns and co-operate within a group. They treat the children with respect and encourage them to think about the feelings of others. The pre-school is well balanced to provide opportunities for children to pursue their own interests as well as take part in adult activities.
- The children are happy and settled and parents approve of the increased pre-school educational structure in the sessions. Staff are confident in their handling of the children and have high expectations; children behave well.
- Children relate well to staff and each other. Independence skills are encouraged at every opportunity. Children pour drinks, visit the toilet on their own and help to clear up their toys. They learn to take turns and share equipment, activities are set up to encourage this.

- They enjoy stories and concentrate well; they listen and respond to questions appropriately.
- The writing desk gives children plenty of opportunities to write, use other related equipment and post letters in the letterbox. Staff encourage children to write their names at every opportunity; most of them recognise their names and can select the tray that is personal to them with ease.

#### **What needs to be improved?**

- Opportunities for the children to extend their vocabulary in the day to day interaction between themselves and adults.
- Planning and staff assessment of where children are in their learning so that staff can help them move to the next stage.
- The development of written reports so that parents can be kept well informed of their child's progress.
- Activities in the area of knowledge and understanding of the world to extend the children's knowledge of other cultures and nature projects in a more meaningful way.

#### **What has improved since the last inspection?**

The pre-school was asked to extend its provision of outdoor equipment to provide more opportunities for children to climb and balance. A large piece of climbing apparatus has been installed suitably sited on safety matting. Children use this daily, weather permitting.

The pre-school were asked to include writing materials in role play areas. They have placed a writing desk just outside the home corner which incorporates pencils, paper, rubber stamps and calculators. The children were observed using this area frequently and with enjoyment.

The group were asked to simplify the children's assessment records. They are using the Local Partnership's care and education profiles and key activity planners. These are not always being used effectively. The staff are also using post it notes to insert into each child's records. Although this strategy is easier for the staff to manage, it is not clear how these are incorporated into the next steps for each child.

## SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

### PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

The children relate well to staff and each other. Independence skills are encouraged at every opportunity. Children pour drinks, visit the toilet on their own and help to clear up their toys. They learn to take turns and share equipment. Some children's ability to concentrate is good, but this is not always the case. A small minority do not settle and move from activity to activity aimlessly; they are gaining very little play value from this behaviour.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

The writing desk gives children plenty of opportunities to write, use other related equipment and post letters in the letterbox. Staff encourage children to trace or write their names but younger children are not given the opportunity to practice pre-writing skills. Most children can recognise their names and can select the tray that is personal to them with ease. Adults are rarely giving the children opportunity to extend their vocabulary in the day to day interactions.

### MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Mathematical understanding is well promoted. A good range of planned mathematical activities are provided using equipment such as puzzles, games and sticking. Children sort, match and recognise mathematical shapes and patterns. Staff are helping them to use mathematical language to describe shape, position and size. However, there is little evidence to show that children are being offered practical activities to develop an understanding of addition and subtraction.

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Visits into the local area and a range of associated activities are used to foster interest and awareness but there are missed opportunities to extend learning to incorporate other cultures. The children are introduced to different materials and have frequent access to sand and water. Some opportunities are provided for the children to learn about nature and other creatures but these are not offered in a meaningful way.

### PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

The children have opportunities for movement, climbing and balancing, some activities spontaneously created by the children and others initiated and supported by adults. Children develop an awareness of space and others around them. They enjoy using a wide range of resources, tools and equipment with appropriate adult support. However, there is little evidence of activities to promote health and bodily awareness in the planning.



## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

There is a good balance between adult led and child led activities. The messy play room allows children daily opportunities to paint freely, and experiment with other creative materials. Children are able to work in three dimensions and play with water and sand frequently. Music activities are offered two or three times a week. Children enjoy singing, listening to tapes and accompanying stories using musical instruments.

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

## **OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION**

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

## **WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES**

- 1. Make planning more effective so that reviews and evidence of learning informs the next steps to be taken both generally and for the individual child.
- 2. Devise written methods of recording feedback to the parents so that they are kept well informed of their child's progress.
- 3. Examine teaching methods and plan how the children can be sufficiently challenged in all aspects of their learning.

*The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.*

## **SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS**

### **STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON**

*Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.*

### **STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION**

*The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.*

### **STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY**

*The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.*

### **STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

*The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.*

### **STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT**

*Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.*

### **STANDARD 6 - SAFETY**

*The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.*

### **STANDARD 7 - HEALTH**

*The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.*

### **STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK**

*Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.*

### **STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

*The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.*

### **STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)**

*The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is*

*proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.*

#### **STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR**

*Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.*

#### **STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS**

*The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.*

#### **STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION**

*The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.*

#### **STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION**

*Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.*