



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 508748

DfES Number: 524440

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 20/10/2004
Inspector Name Anita Bartram

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Rainbow Pre-School
Setting Address Chelmer Village Hall
Chelmer Village
CHELMSFORD
Essex
CM2 6RF

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Rainbow Pre-School 1054083

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Rainbow Pre-School
Address Chelmer Village Hall
Chelmer Village
Chelmsford
Essex
CM2 6RF

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

Rainbow Pre-School opened in 1982. It operates from the large hall within the Village Hall in Chelmer Village, near Chelmsford. The pre-school serves the local and wider area.

There are currently 69 children from 2 to 5 years on roll. This includes 34 funded three year olds and 15 funded four year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports a small number of children who have special needs or who have English as an additional language.

The group opens for ten sessions a week during school term times. Morning sessions are from 09.20 until 11.50. Afternoon sessions are from 12.30 until 15.00.

Eleven part-time staff work with the children. Five staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. One member of staff is currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)

How good is the Day Care?

Rainbow Pre-School provides good care for children.

The organisation of the setting is appropriate and staff are deployed effectively to work directly with the children. Staff ensure a warm and welcoming environment through posters on display, notices and well-prepared activities. There is a wide and stimulating range of resources that are planned well to cover all areas of the children's learning. Children use the outdoor area as part of the routine or for activities to support the group's theme, such as looking for mini-beasts. All documentation is in place.

Staff provide a safe and secure environment for the children. All staff are aware of the children's safety and measures are firmly in place to minimise hazards to children. There are good working procedures in place on outings. Most staff have

current first aid certificates. Children are able to try a variety of foods at snack time and staff use this time to extend the children's social and language skills. All staff are appropriately aware of their child protection responsibilities.

Staff provide a caring environment where children's individual needs are considered, although the settling in procedure is not always sufficiently broken down into small enough steps for some children to settle at their own pace. Staff follow very effective working practices to meet the specific needs of children with special educational needs. There is a valuable range of resources to promote positive images of diversity to children. Children play purposefully and co-operatively. Overall children's behaviour is good. They appreciate right from wrong and staff have a good understanding of the reasons behind children's unwanted behaviour.

Staff are readily available to speak with parents at the end of the sessions. Parents are welcomed into the group at any time and are invited to special days in the group's calendar such as Christmas celebrations. Children's developmental records are available upon request.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection, the provider agreed to ensure the complaints procedure includes Ofsted's contact details. This has been done and parents are now aware they can contact Ofsted at any point in the complaints process.

The hall committee are responsible for checking the fire safety equipment on the premises. Monica Burdett gave an assurance that equipment is checked regularly. Fire blankets are to hand both in the large hall and in the kitchen. A fire drill is carried out termly with the staff and children, and this is recorded and logged.

What is being done well?

- The children are cared for in a very secure environment. Staff personally welcome children onto the premises and closely monitor children leaving the hall to ensure no child leaves unsupervised. Staff are vigilant in their management of the children's use of the climbing frame.
- The staff have effective procedures in place to support children with special educational needs. They consult with parents about any concerns and discuss strategies that could help their child. Staff liaise pro-actively with other professionals to enable them to effectively meet children's specific needs and implement individual educational plans devised by advisory staff.
- Staff manage the children's behaviour in a consistent and positive way. They use rewards and praise to encourage good behaviour, but at the same time make children aware of unwanted behaviour through sensitive reasoning. Staff take time at the start of sessions to remind children of rules and expectations of the group, and therefore little unwanted behaviour seen.
- Staff provide a friendly and inviting atmosphere to both children and parents. The premises are bright and colourful inside, with some displays of children's work. Activities are well-prepared and laid out on tables before children arrive

so that they can go to familiar toys and activities once registration time has finished.

- There is a wide range of resources on offer to the children, including a valuable selection of toys that promote positive images of diversity. The role-play area is stimulating and fun. During most sessions, children use this area constantly and enthusiastically to re-enact familiar scenes from home or at the shops.

What needs to be improved?

- the settling in procedure; to enable staff to be more reactive to children's individual needs, and thus offer more support for more sensitive children or those with English as an additional language
- the access parents have to their own child's development records.

Outcome of the inspection

Good

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 should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection

Std	Recommendation
2	Review the effectiveness of the settling-in procedure to enable children to be more fully supported when starting the group.
12	Enable parents to be more closely involved with monitoring and recording their child's progress and achievements.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

Provision for nursery education at Rainbow Pre-School is good. It enables children to make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children make generally good progress in the other four areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff provide valuable experiences to cover all six areas of learning. However, pre-school sessions sometimes provide less challenge for more-able or older children, due to staff gearing resources and routines towards older children in Rising Rainbows sessions. This is particularly evident during whole group times.

Staff have a sound awareness of asking children open-ended questions to help their understanding and are skilled in posing simple number problems to children. This helps children to develop their interest in number and calculation. Activities planned for Rising Rainbows are varied. However, staff do not plan sufficient detail to ensure activities are pitched according to children's stage of development. This sometimes results in learning intentions that are too high for children to grasp.

Leadership is generally good. The supervisor manages a committed staff team who are well-motivated. She has a sound knowledge of the six areas of learning and is a good role-model. However, planning is not sufficiently informed by childrens' assessment records to identify gaps in their learning. As a result, balance between support for less mature children, and challenge for more-able children is not always consistently spread between pre-school and Rising Rainbows sessions.

Partnership with parents is generally good. Parents are provided with valuable information and are actively encouraged to share information about their child when they start the group. However, parents do not have ready access to their own child's development records, which restricts some in monitoring or recording their child's achievements.

What is being done well?

- Children are forming positive relationships with both each other and adults. Older children are beginning to make special friendships with each other, and seek out friends to share fun activities with, such as looking at the snails or playing with the sand.
- Staff are skilled in helping children develop an interest in calculation. During register time, staff challenge children to work out how many staff there are and therefore how many adults are present if the visitor is included. Children use their fingers purposefully to add two small numbers together. Some more-able children can add one more onto a given total under ten.

- Children's use and understanding of information and communication technology is very good. More-able children sit alongside younger children to act as effective role-models when using the full-sized computer. They ably manoeuvre the mouse between software programmes. All children competently use simple ICT equipment such as tills, phones and keyboards during role-play.
- The provision of role-play during pre-school sessions has a very positive impact on all areas of children's learning. Children develop mathematical skills as they sort and fit plastic foods into baskets and bags. They form large groups to work co-operatively to act out familiar sequences from home. They negotiate as the shopkeeper and help each other get dressed up ready for their game.

What needs to be improved?

- the effectiveness of whole group times in supporting or extending children's learning according to their stage of development or understanding
- the challenge and extension for more-able children during pre-school sessions
- the detail in planning for the focused activities in Rising Rainbows, to ensure teaching methods follow the principles of the Foundation Stage, and the learning outcomes are more suited to covering gaps in children's learning.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Generally good progress has been made in implementing the action plan drawn up to address the three key issues identified at the previous inspection, resulting in good improvements being made to the educational programme.

Planning now covers all six areas of learning and the supervisor has a good working knowledge of the early learning goals. Learning objectives are identified, although these are not always informed by identified gaps in children's progress through the stepping-stones.

As a result of the specific Rising Rainbow sessions identified for older children, staff do not always fully challenge more-able children during the normal pre-school sessions. At the same time, during Rising Rainbows, staff rely quite heavily upon more formal teaching methods more suited to the later stage of the Foundation Stage or Key Stage One of the National Curriculum. As a result, staff sometimes miss opportunities to use play to extend children's learning.

Staff now have a very thorough understanding of the Code of Practice (2001) for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs. Staff are pro-active in finding out information to help each child with special educational needs. Staff visit specialist centres to observe and discuss how best they can help the child in their setting. Parents are kept fully informed and individual education plans are reviewed and updated regularly.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are confident and have positive attitudes to new experiences. They willingly tackle developmentally appropriate tasks such as putting on dressing-up clothes, or pouring drinks. Older children sensitively help younger ones with fastenings on clothes. Children's relationships are sound, which reflect in the quality of their imaginative play skills. Children's behaviour is generally good. Staff seize timely opportunities to reinforce boundaries and most children respond well to these.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children use speech for a wide range of purposes. They ask meaningful questions, describe what they are doing and some more-able children are beginning to reflect on what they are thinking. Children's early reading skills are progressing soundly. Most children can recognise their name. More-able children delight in hearing rhyming words. Although resources are available for children to write purposefully during play, these are not presented adequately to stimulate the children's use.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children enjoy counting and willingly count each other during registration time. They confidently recognise familiar numerals such as 1,3,4 and 5. Children have a keen interest in calculation due to the skilful use of questioning staff use during registration time. Children delight in using their fingers to add up. Children understand 2D shapes. However, staff do not seize opportunities during play to extend more-able children's awareness of simple 3D shapes such as spheres and cubes.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children have an excellent understanding of both the uses of ICT and how to operate equipment. More-able children use the mouse independently and younger children eagerly use the simple ICT equipment such as the till in the role-play shop. Children are curious and keen to investigate. They crowd around the snails and use magnifying glasses purposefully. Children's skills in designing and making are good. They construct with real purpose in mind to make vehicles or fold paper to make cards.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children competently to move around the large hall or find a suitable space to sit at story time. Children use both large and small equipment skilfully. They climb the A-frame confidently and use tools such as cutters, scissors and magnifying glasses purposefully. Children's physical skills are sound. However, staff do not always sufficiently enable more-able children to take safe risks to extend their physical skills, such as exploring different ways of moving over or around the A-frame.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children use imaginative play well and their skills are reflected in other areas of learning. They use props to support their play, and more-able children play co-operatively in large groups. Provision for role-play is not as accessible during Rising Rainbow sessions. Children enjoy constructing with bricks and play-dough. More-able children select colours appropriate to what they are making. Ready opportunities for children to explore and develop their skills in music are not frequent enough.

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

- improve the effectiveness of whole group times to support or extend children's learning according to their stage of development or understanding
- provide more challenge and extension for more-able children during pre-school sessions
- increase the detail in planning for the focused activities in Rising Rainbows, to ensure teaching methods follow the principles of the Foundation Stage, and the learning outcomes are more pertinent to the gaps in children's 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.