

Raunds Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Susan Marriott

Setting address	2 Poplars Close, Poplars Close, Raunds, Northants, NN9 6EZ
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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

Raunds Day Nursery opened in 1996 and is privately owned. It operates from purpose-built accommodation adjacent to the owner's premises in Raunds, Northamptonshire. There are two inter-linked teaching areas, each with toilet provision. One is for the two- to three-year-olds and the other for the three- to five-year-olds. There is a safely enclosed outdoor garden with a covered paved area and a larger play area surfaced with wood chips.

The nursery is open between 7.30am and 5.30pm on weekdays, all year round except for Bank Holidays. Full- and part-time sessions are offered. The nursery also operates a before and after school hours service as well as holiday provision for children who have previously attended the nursery.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and both parts of the Childcare Register to provide a maximum of 40 places for children in the early years age group aged from birth to under eight years. There are currently 43 children on roll and of these, 23 receive funding for nursery education. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. The children mainly come from the local and surrounding areas.

Six staff work with the children throughout the week. All hold appropriate childcare qualifications. A qualified cook is also employed to provide meals on the premises. The nursery receives input from the local authority. The nursery is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The exceptionally skilled staff team have truly captured the essence and spirit of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children become inquisitive, motivated and highly independent learners as they explore the wealth of exciting and challenging experiences presented to them. Their individual needs are fully met within this enriching setting which has a fully inclusive approach to care learning and development. Children make rapid progress in their learning and development and have tremendous fun in the process. Passionate, strong leadership and honest, realistic self-evaluation, secures the setting's excellent capacity for continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- strengthening the links between written observations and the tracking of children's progress.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's care, learning and welfare is significantly enhanced by the caring vision of the owner and the highly effective way in which the nursery school is led and managed. A continuous and dynamic programme of constant improvement over recent years has led to the sustained extension and support of children's learning in all areas of the curriculum. Current safeguarding requirements are robustly met and all staff are suitably cleared to work with children. Security measures are superb and ensure the safety of children and staff. Visitors are warmly welcomed and their presence is suitably monitored and recorded. Thoroughly detailed risk assessments are carried out visually on a daily basis and written assessments are devised for every area of the nursery school and for every type of outing. Regular practise of fire drills secures the safety of children and staff.

Extremely effective links with the parents and carers, together with other professionals involved in the care and education of the children, enables the nursery school to tailor activities to the individual needs of children in their care. All required documentation is readily accessible and effectively underpins the exceptionally safe and efficient management of the setting. The nursery school is fully inclusive and meets the needs of all children, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who have English as an additional language. Policies and procedures are consistently implemented to promote equality and eliminate discrimination. The nursery actively seeks resources and artefacts to incorporate a wide range of cultures, religions, disabilities and ethnic backgrounds and challenge any prejudice attitudes by staff, parents or children. Staff continue to extend their knowledge of the different ways people live and aim to be non-judgemental.

The owner is passionately committed to her vocation and receives enthusiastic support from her dedicated and loyal staff who speak of the nursery team as a family. They deploy themselves in a highly effective manner to ensure that children are constantly well supervised as they move freely between the indoor and outdoor environment. Continuing staff development is vitally important in this vibrant nursery and the resultant enhancement of staff skills and knowledge contribute substantially towards the rapid progress the children make. Staff demonstrate an exceptionally high level of knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage, thereby securing excellent learning and development outcomes for children. They are not afraid to try out new ideas and happily experiment to find out what works for particular children. The nursery makes outstanding use of the space available and ensures that the six areas of learning are reflected equally outside and as well as indoors.

Parents are actively encouraged to share their skills, knowledge and culture with the children. Parents can fill in a parent resource sheet, telling of their careers and hobbies. When doing certain role plays or outdoor experiences, staff can then ask

parents to come and show the children different skills. For example, a bricklayer showed children how to build a small wall and builders came to show the children how to use tools to build things. This resulted in the development of the builder's yard and large construction area which has provided the children with lots of learning experiences. A midwife came to show the children how to bath and change a baby, which promoted nurturing role play and discussion about caring for others.

Partnership working is reflected in the genuine efforts to strengthen links with other providers and strategies include visiting the local schools and inviting staff to visit the nursery. This liaison facilitates informed conversations with the children and their parents about their next steps. The nursery extends partnership working to other professionals outside the setting to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities when appropriate. The nursery makes every effort to work in partnership with parents and carers who value this personal care, support and attention. Parents are genuinely keen to work with the staff and actively contribute their views and observations of their child's learning at home to provide an extended picture of nursery from the family perspective.

The organisation of the daily routine ensures that staff are always available to give daily feedback to parents and carers about children's activities and progress. A vast array of useful information is available on notice boards for parents. Parents confirm that staff are very friendly and approachable and always find the time to stop and chat when they drop off and collect their children. Activities are evaluated daily and observational notes are recorded in an extremely manageable format to enable staff to track children's progress and identify the next steps in their learning. Highly effective planning systems ensure that the next steps are collated and fed back into the subsequent plans. Consequently, the setting has developed exceptionally reflective practice to monitor the quality of provision for children, demonstrating the nursery school's outstanding capacity for continuous improvement. The staff accepts that strengthening the links between written observations and the tracking information is potentially an area for further improvement.

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

The staff team demonstrate an exceptionally competent knowledge of the Foundation Stage and deliver a superb and varied programme of play-based activities which provide a balance across all six areas of learning. Children are making rapid progress towards the early learning goals. By the time they go to school they are ready, well prepared and confident to accept the transition to their new environment.

A unique and distinctive feature of this nursery is the superior enabling outdoor environment. Children have regular opportunities for fresh air and exercise because they can choose whether to play indoors or out. This innovative garden is packed full of stimulating challenges for the children and they become totally

absorbed in a vast range of versatile learning opportunities which cover all areas of the curriculum. The Forest School area has a camp fire with real logs. Children can build a den, enjoy messy play in sawdust with dinosaurs or paint on clear plastic sheets. Staff provide natural materials wherever possible. For example, real bricks are provided in the exciting construction area. Children draw on the blackboard with large chalks and pens, learning how to control their large arm muscle movements. They climb, jump and balance on a versatile range of equipment. For example, children pile up the tyres, climbing and jumping on them, pretending to be monkeys. Children are actively encouraged to care for their environment and have regular opportunities to participate in activities such as planting and growing. For example, they have planted potatoes in the growing patch and have helped to set up an observational wormery in the garden. Children know that 'The book says you must keep the worms covered as worms do not like to get too hot or get too much sun'. Children enjoy books in the outdoor reading den, and sit on 'wellie boot' seats, made especially by the owner's husband.

Children respond to new activities and challenge with lively interest. They enthusiastically select, explore and investigate the vast range of interesting play activities and show high levels of concentration and curiosity as they play at the interactive water gullies mounted on the garden fencing. Children are fascinated as they observe the water flow between the funnels. Staff know when to stand back and let play continue uninterrupted and when to intervene to make suggestions to extend learning. As a result, all ages co-operate exceptionally well as they play alongside one another and continue to explore and experiment with the complex guttering water run. When the reservoir tub is empty, staff supply the hosepipe for the children to re-fill the tub themselves, effectively fostering independence and the ability to work together harmoniously.

An extremely flexible and child-centred approach to planning and an excellent balance between adult- and child-led activities allows children to learn at their own pace. Planning is highly effective because the staff have ownership of their system. They gather baseline information on entry to the provision. They make notes on a daily basis of children's stages of development and ensure that plans incorporate strategies for helping children with any particular difficulties in a particular area of learning. They plan the progression of learning for other areas as they acknowledge that children will often re-visit the same key learning experience time after time. Conscientiously kept assessment folders are based upon dated observations, arranged under the six areas of learning and parents and carers make their own contributions. The system enables children's progress to be tracked easily against the criteria in the Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Therefore, assessment is fully effective in securing children's progression in learning and informing the next steps in the learning programme.

Staff are confident to explain what they are doing and why, secure in their own knowledge and understanding of how children learn. They sustain a totally child-centered environment, keenly building on the children's interests and spontaneous events. For example, they notice that the children really respond to popular music that they hear at home. Consequently, a discotheque area has been created with flashing lights, glittery shoes and karaoke microphones. At frequent intervals during the day, children dance and sing along with their favourite artists,

expressing and communicating their ideas, thoughts and feelings by using role-play, movement and song.

Staff use clear and highly skilled teaching techniques which they confidently adapt to suit the various ages of children at this setting. Children enjoy good, trusting relationships with staff who get down to their level and engage in meaningful questioning, conversation and discussion which develops learning through play. Excellent priority is given to the development of children's speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Children enjoy a story, sing songs and talk about matters of interest and significance. For example, staff and children acknowledge the special occasion of the birthday of a volunteer. They sing 'Happy Birthday' and watch appreciatively as presents are opened. Children's understanding of the relevance of healthy lifestyles is promoted very well. They are offered opportunities to be active and in discussion with staff, begin to understand the benefits and effects of physical activity. Nutritious meals are prepared on the premises by the qualified cook and children are actively encouraged to understand relevance of healthy eating.

Children enjoy good relationships at all levels and staff clearly enjoy working with the children, sustaining high quality interaction which draws the maximum learning from play. For example, children giggle with staff and discuss how tricky it is to pick up dried peas with tweezers. There is much good natured laughter as the children attempt to place the peas into the indentations on soap suction pads. Children show an interest and an awareness of change, for example, through making a strawberry and banana smoothie. They gain an awareness of the cultures and beliefs of others as they make 'Henna Hands' for Diwali and create their own Rangoli patterns with rice and collage materials. A colourful display of marble painting shows that children begin to combine movement, media and marks and engage in activities requiring hand-eye co-ordination. Displays are generously annotated with printed words to create a language rich environment where children can begin to learn that information can be relayed in the form of print. Displays also provide parents and carers with an effective source of information about the activities that their children enjoy and show what learning has been gained from that activity. Numerals are also displayed indoors and out. For example, in the garden, 10 green bottles are suitably numbered and indoors, a poster shows children how to spot numerals in the environment, such as those on a car number plate, a tape measure and a number on a house front door.

Children select their own activities as their learning experience is far more involved if they are self-motivated to learn. Staff know that free choice helps independence and concentration levels and ensure that the majority of the key experiences are open-ended to allow children the time to experiment and continually develop and progress towards the early learning goals. They provide learning experiences indoors and out and consistently reflect upon their practice to evaluate the level of interest children show in the different areas of the nursery. For example, staff realised that boys in particular, were not using the indoor writing area. Nearby, a tuff spot tray is filled with a soft-stuffed Spiderman character, superheroes and their accessories to entice children to come and play at this end of the nursery. Staff have now covered the writing area chairs with Spiderman pillowcases and the table is covered in Spiderman paper. The area is draped with web-like material and

positive images of men engaged in reading and writing activities have made the area more inviting for boys. Consequently, more boys are beginning to use the area. Through their review of activities at the painting easel, staff decided to provide cotton buds to encourage more refined muscle movement in children. Children are now spontaneously writing their names in paint.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

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

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