

# Inspection of The Rocking Horse Nursery

81 Heanor Road, Ilkeston, Derbyshire DE7 8DY

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Inspection date: 4 December 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Overall effectiveness at previous  
inspection

Good

## **What is it like to attend this early years setting?**

### **The provision requires improvement**

Staff plan activities around topics so that children are introduced to a variety of new and different learning themes. This contributes in some way to offering a broad and varied curriculum through which staff aim to promote and support the different areas of children's learning and development. However, staff do not always provide age-appropriate activities relevant to children's abilities. For instance, sometimes, children of all ages are invited to participate in activities with similar learning outcomes. Younger children struggle because they have not yet learned the skills and knowledge they need to join in. Older children find the activities too easy and require more challenge to accelerate their rapid development.

Staff recognise the importance of sharing stories with children. Children self-select books and staff are quick to respond by reading these to them. Children's emotional security is supported through their close contact with staff as they sit on their knees and engage in one-to-one storytelling. However, less respect is given to literacy during group activities. Children join and leave the group at different times as they respond to staff's requests for helpers at the lunch table. Staff talk over each other, and some staff address incidents of children's poor behaviour by stopping the group reading activity altogether. This disruption hinders children's development and discourages their love of books.

### **What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?**

- Staff are skilful at supporting children's communication and language development. Their playful interactions with children are language rich. Children hear lots of new words being spoken around them. This helps to build their vocabularies. Staff use open-ended questions and comments to encourage children's use of language.
- Staff encourage children to be physically active. Children engage in adult-led games outside, where exercises such as running and jumping are included. This helps children to become fit, supports their developing agility and promotes their growing stamina.
- The nursery chef works with staff to plan and deliver cookery sessions. Children are involved in preparing meals, most recently spaghetti bolognese. They take their food home to share with their families. Staff provide the recipe so families can recreate the dish at home. This initiative encourages parents to continue supporting their children's learning at home and promotes children's healthy lifestyles.
- Staff invite children to form a mini committee where they can share their thoughts about the nursery and give ideas about what they want to do. Staff respond to children's wishes. This further extends children's learning and

promotes values such as respect and democracy.

- Staff's implementation of the curriculum is not always sequenced or adapted well enough to meet the different learning needs of children. Sometimes, children approach new learning without adequate prior knowledge or skills to support them. At other times, staff do not provide enough challenges for children to progress quickly. For example, during creative activities, older babies struggle to hold and control paintbrushes. Oppositely, pre-school children find tasks too easy when gluing pre-cut shapes onto a collage picture.
- Staff use appropriate assessment methods to help them decide what children should learn next. However, staff do not fully consider the relevance of the activities they plan. Sometimes, activities are not best suited to the staff's desired learning outcome. This means the intent of an activity is not always delivered successfully. That said, children enjoy their play experiences throughout the nursery and are happy accessing the different activities on offer.
- Staff promote children's good manners. Children sing the 'Thank you' song before they eat their lunch. They hear staff role model kind words. Children demonstrate politeness throughout their interactions. However, some isolated incidents of poor behaviour are not dealt with by staff in the best way. Sometimes, staff draw unnecessary attention to a child and their behaviour when the strategies used could be much more discreet to support children's emotional well-being.
- The manager has recently delivered training to staff on how they should read books to engage and excite children. The benefit of this training is seen during one-to-one teaching moments, but not at large-group times. The organisation of collective storytelling activities is not well thought through. Interruptions from staff mean that children lose their focus, or even fail to engage to begin with. This potentially has a negative impact on children's relationship with books.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff understand their child protection roles and responsibilities. They can recognise the indicators of abuse and neglect and know what to do if they have any concerns about a child. Staff understand and follow risk assessment processes. Children learn how to stay safe. For example, they know to be careful when playing outside in icy conditions in case they slip. Management ensures staff's suitability to fulfil their roles through robust recruitment and vetting processes. Staff hold valid and relevant first-aid qualifications so they can respond appropriately if a child has an accident.

## What does the setting need to do to improve?

**To further improve the quality of the early years provision, the provider should:**

- deepen staff's understanding and improve their delivery of an age-appropriate curriculum that builds on children's prior learning, so that children can confidently and securely build on what they know and can already do
- upskill staff so they can identify, plan and deliver more relevant activities when teaching children new knowledge and skills
- adjust the ways in which staff support children's behaviour, to maintain a consistently positive approach which promotes children's emotional well-being throughout
- support staff to deliver the setting's literacy curriculum more successfully at group times to engage children in quality book-sharing experiences which develop their life-long love of reading.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	206286
<b>Local authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10310891
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Full day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	0 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	36
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	46
<b>Name of registered person</b>	The Rocking Horse Nurseries Ltd
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP910236
<b>Telephone number</b>	0115 930 5240
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	16 August 2018

## Information about this early years setting

The Rocking Horse Nursery registered in 1990 and is located in Ilkeston, Derbyshire. The setting employs seven members of childcare staff. Of these, four hold an appropriate early years qualification at level 3. The setting opens Monday to Friday, all year round, except for bank holidays. Sessions are from 8am until 6pm. The setting provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Charlotte Whalley

## Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the setting and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of a creative activity with the manager.
- The inspector took account of parents' views as part of the inspection.
- The inspector spoke to the staff at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the setting.

We carried out this inspection under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the early years foundation stage.

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