



Rhymetime Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY320449
Inspection date	07 July 2006
Inspector	Paula Jane Hayhow
Setting Address	Newton Road, Rushden, Northamptonshire, NN10 0HH
Telephone number	01933 411741
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Registered person	Avenue Nannies Ltd
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Rhymetime Nursery is one of three nurseries run by Avenue Nannies Ltd. The nursery was registered in December 2005 and operates within the grounds of Newton Road Community Primary School in the town of Rushden, in Northamptonshire. The children under three-years-old are accommodated in a self-contained unit, which includes a baby and toddler room. The pre-school building consists of two large activity rooms. The children who attend the out of school club

use the toddler room in the morning and the pre-school rooms in the evening. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

A maximum of 96 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year except for Bank Holidays. Children can attend a variety of sessions.

There are currently 73 children aged from three months to under eleven years on roll. Of these, 27 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local catchment area and surrounding villages. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and can support children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs ten members of staff. Of these, eight hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a recognised qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a comfortable, clean environment. Their health is promoted because managers pay attention to details, for example, there are clear policies regarding the exclusion of children who are unwell, and staff have attended additional training regarding health issues such as food hygiene. There are good daily hygiene practices in place which prevent the spread of infection, for example, staff wear appropriate protective clothing and children wash their hands before snack and meal times and clean their teeth after lunch. However, children's understanding of the relevance of these practices is not consistently promoted because staff do not always discuss and explain this. They wash their hands before each meal and snack time but staff miss some opportunities to discuss this further and increase children's understanding.

Children enjoy a wide range of physical activities which contribute to their good health. They develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills and co-ordination as they participate in adult-led activities such as dancing and action rhymes. They also regularly use the outdoor play area where they access play equipment such as ride-on toys, balls and climbing frame, showing their enjoyment as they learn new skills such as balancing, climbing ladders and jumping in hoops as they take turns on the obstacle course. Younger children's development is consistently promoted as staff have a good understanding of child development and combine this with their knowledge of individual children to ensure that all areas of physical health are covered. For example staff members provide additional encouragement for children unsure of their ability on the balancing beams. The older children attending the out of school club improve their physical skills through hobbies such as football and cricket. Their finer motor skills are encouraged through craft activities such as painting and drawing.

Children's special requirements with regard to health and diet are well documented and observed. They are offered healthy and nutritious snacks because staff have a good understanding of this area and ensure that foods contain a balanced range of fresh ingredients and have low sugar and salt content, thus promoting children's growth and development. Snack and meal times are viewed as social events, with children and staff using the time to discuss current topics and events. However, children are not always encouraged to pour their own drinks at this time or to serve themselves when appropriate, limiting their independence in this area.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment where resources are well organised and easily accessible. Their daily safety is generally promoted. There are sound procedures in place covering most areas of work, for example, there is an efficient security system, visitors are closely monitored and there are clear procedures regarding emergency evacuation of babies and non-mobile children. Children are developing an understanding about taking responsibility and keeping themselves and others safe. They are given explanations by staff so that they understand the importance of safety practices such as fire drills, and the relevance of sitting correctly on a chair and not running inside. However, children's safety could be compromised as they have access to the outside drain and some flooring areas which are uneven. Whilst there have been no incidents to date this cannot be fully guaranteed.

Children's safety and comfort is promoted by the provision of equipment which is always appropriate for the age group using it. Children independently select toys and activities from a range of good quality resources. Their welfare is promoted as staff have attended additional training and have a sound understanding of child protection procedures and are able to identify, report and follow up any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, secure and settled, enjoying their time at the nursery. They come in eagerly and are keen to participate in the activities and play opportunities. Their self-esteem and confidence are consistently promoted because staff are sensitive to each child and offer appropriate support and encouragement. Children's work and photos are displayed, promoting their sense of belonging and value. Babies and new children settle well and become secure in their relationships with staff because staff take time to get to know the children, making sure that they are aware of all routines, paying particular attention to ensuring that they have all relevant information from parents.

The planning of activities for all age groups ensures that children are consistently offered a range of opportunities which are linked to their individual needs and capabilities. Staff have a good understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework

and have utilised this in all areas of planning and assessment for younger children, ensuring that their play is fun, purposeful and stimulating. The organisation of play areas and the careful deployment of staff further promote this, allowing babies and young children the space, resources and attention they need to develop. Staff are caring and show their genuine enjoyment of their work, demonstrating this through their constant interaction with the children, for example, babies learning to walk are given the necessary support and encouragement enabling them to feel secure and keen to try again.

Children are able to make choices about their play and learning because all areas are planned and staff are vigilant, noticing when children need additional support. Children are encouraged to do as much as possible for themselves and staff are skilled in using daily routines as learning opportunities. For example, when feeling thirsty the children are able to pour their own drink and at packing up time the children help to put toys away ready for the next session.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress and their overall development is promoted because staff have a good knowledge of the Curriculum for the foundation stage, planning and adapting activities appropriately. Children's progress in all areas is balanced as staff use a simple but generally effective way of documenting children's achievements and recording them within their individual assessment files. However, there is insufficient detail to develop the activity planning procedure so that this clearly demonstrates how the activity will be presented, how it is evaluated and how this information will feed future planning. Written assessments do not clearly show children's starting points, which could lead to a delay in highlighting potential areas of concern and assessing early progress.

Children demonstrate their enjoyment as they participate in the wide range of activities. These include opportunities to engage in imaginative role play scenarios, cooking, outdoor play and a wide variety of crafts and construction activities. Children's knowledge is further extended as they participate in a variety of themed topics, enabling them to look more closely at subjects such as 'people who help us' 'sports' and 'the travel agency shop', where they discuss different topics, acting out scenarios to bring meaning to this. Children interact with others, confidently initiating conversations and negotiating plans and activities. An example of this is a group of children involved in role play, organising a trip to Majorca through the travel agency, deciding what deals are available, discussing how they will travel, what to pack and what they will do when they arrive. Older children use writing as a means of recording and communication, for example, a group of children involved in role play organise a picnic and write out shopping lists of food to buy at the shop. Children enjoy listening to stories, reading books, often telling their own made up story to their friends.

Children generally persevere at tasks and are enthusiastic about their play and activities. They show curiosity when presented with new activities, for example, a small group of children icing football biscuits listen carefully to what they should do and decide on what toppings to put on them, discussing the size, shape and colour of the toppings. They confidently use a wide range of tools such as scissors, dough cutters and cooking utensils, selecting the correct tools for their task. An example of

this is a child at the writing table choosing a pencil when writing on smaller pieces of paper, or a child choosing the scissors which fit their hand best.

Children show developing skills in mathematics and are beginning to understand that numbers carry meaning. They are able to compare groups of objects and recognise differences in size, for example, considering whose tower is the tallest and how they can make each one the same. They are beginning to use numbers in a meaningful context, for example, counting the number of children present at snack time and singing number rhymes where they carefully hold up the correct number of fingers, pointing to these as they count. They are gaining an awareness of their own culture and that of others through activities, discussions and regular access to resources such as play figures, dolls, materials from around the world and globes. They are gaining an understanding of their community through projects such 'people who help us' using topics such as recycling, doctors, nurses and road safety to promote further knowledge of their local environment. They make good use of information and communication technology equipment through programmable games, computers, telephones and calculators. These are often set up in a practical situation such as offices, shops, surgeries to develop children's understanding of their neighbourhood.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are provided with a wide range of activities and resources which promote a positive view of the wider world and increase their awareness of diversity. They are beginning to gain an appreciation of their own culture and others through discussions, stories and the observation of religious festivals. Children who have special needs have their requirements clearly identified as there is a practical policy relating to this and staff ensure that it is implemented, working appropriately with individual children to make sure that all are included in the activities and routines.

Children are beginning to show care and concern for each other and their behaviour is generally good as they choose their activities and organise turn-taking and sharing. They readily line up for the obstacle course and remind staff that some children have not had a turn. Older children include the younger ones in their play, often helping them to join in with activities, writing their name on their pictures, and including them in their games. They respond well to staff, and the positive approach and good staff role modelling ensures that children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. However, there is insufficient detail about dealing with bullying should this occur.

The quality of the setting's partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. There is an active commitment to involving parents in the setting and in their children's learning. Parents are given clear information in the form of a portfolio booklet when their child starts at the nursery. They are encouraged to make use of as many taster sessions as needed, enabling them to spend time in the setting, helping their child to feel secure and comfortable. Parents are given information about the Curriculum for the foundation stage, the 'Birth to three matters' framework, current activities and themes and these are displayed on the parents' notice board.

This enables the parents to understand what the children are gaining in the nursery and inform them of how to extend their child's learning at home. The parents are kept well informed of their children's progress through informal discussions with staff, daily report sheets, policy folders and an informative notice board. Children's care and opportunities are enhanced because managers regularly seek feedback from parents and use this to review and improve their practice. This positive attitude ensures that parents' views are valued, standards are maintained and appropriate care can be provided for each child.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The children's play opportunities are promoted by the good organisation of space, allowing them the freedom to move safely and independently from one activity to another. This enables them to feel confident to initiate their own play and learning. Children's welfare, care and safety are promoted through the staff's practical knowledge of the nursery's policies and procedures. There are thorough procedures in place for checking that all staff are suitable to work with children and this is supported by a clear induction process for new staff, ensuring that all are able to work appropriately with the children. Children's overall welfare is further promoted by the clear understanding that the nursery owner and nursery manager have of their role and responsibilities, ensuring that they are aware of all regulations and changes in legislation, reflecting these in the procedures, policies and daily practice of the nursery. These are regularly reviewed and understood by all staff, ensuring that they are able to act appropriately at all times.

The quality of leadership and management is good and children benefit from a well-managed setting. Managers and senior staff act as good role models, demonstrating their genuine enthusiasm, dedication and enjoyment of their work. This creates a positive atmosphere within the setting and staff are motivated, regularly attending additional training. This ensures that they are able to provide appropriate care for all children. Children are always given sufficient time and resources to enable them to complete their activities and tasks. Staff meet regularly, sometimes daily, to plan future work, ensuring that the needs of individual children are met and their development is promoted. Overall, the provision meets the needs of all children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration. The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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):

- develop procedures at snack and meal times to encourage children's independence and their understanding of healthy eating and hygiene practices
- ensure that children are safe and cannot access the hazardous items such as the uneven flooring and uncovered drain
- continue to review paperwork and policies to ensure that policies contain sufficient detail to enable staff to promote children's welfare at all times, this refers to the procedure to follow in the event of bullying

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):

- continue to develop the activity planning procedure so that this clearly demonstrates how the activity will be adapted, how it is evaluated and how this information will feed future planning
- further develop the methods for assessing children so that these show their starting point so that progress can be charted and any issues highlighted at an early stage

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