



Rothamsted Little Stars Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	123610
Inspection date	20 November 2006
Inspector	Suman Willis
Setting Address	Rothamsted Research, Rothamsted, Harpenden, Hertfordshire, AL5 2JQ
Telephone number	Claire roberts 01582 763133 ext 2506
E-mail	littlestars.rothamsted@brighthorizons.com
Registered person	Bright Horizons Family Solutions Ltd.
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Rothamsted Little Stars Nursery is one of 100 nurseries run by Bright Horizons Family Solutions Limited. It opened in January 2000 and operates from three rooms in a single storey building in the grounds of Rothamsted Park. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery serves children from the local area in Harpenden, mainly from parents working for the Rothamsted Agricultural Experimental Station. A maximum of 39 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 all year round excluding bank holidays and between Christmas and New Year.

The setting also offers a playscheme facility for children from five to fourteen years which runs during all school holidays except between Christmas and New Year. The scheme is open from 08.00 to 18.00.

There are currently forty nine children from three months to five years on roll. Of these twenty receive funding for early education. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities, and also supports children who have English as an additional language.

The nursery employs twelve members of staff, including the cook. Of these, ten hold appropriate early years qualifications, and one is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy regular fresh air and develop their physical skills. They participate in running games such as 'What's the time, Mr. Wolf?' and learn to move with control. Children extend their pedalling skills as they move from push-along ride on toys to bigger bikes. They manoeuvre their ride on toy with confidence. Older children are developing their knowledge of exercise being important for staying healthy. However, children have limited opportunities to extend their physical skills through their daily routine. Children develop their fine motor skills as they complete jigsaw puzzles, construct with different materials, and use paint brushes, therefore also developing their hand-eye co-ordination.

Children stay healthy because staff promote themselves as good role models by wearing disposable aprons and gloves when changing nappies. Policies and procedures are effectively shared with parents to ensure children's health is monitored. Children are beginning to understand simple good health and hygiene practices. All children are encouraged to manage their own personal hygiene, and staff are on hand to offer support and to remind children to wash their hands before and after meals. Pre-school children enjoy the story of how germs spread and how to stay healthy. Staff are appropriately qualified to apply emergency aid if necessary.

Children are well nourished and enjoy well balanced meals such as chicken, rice and peas. Regular fresh drinking water is readily available for children to help themselves. Staff are reviewing mealtime procedures to enable older children to be more independent and younger children to be appropriately supported. Children's individual dietary needs are effectively met because parents provide information about children's allergies and cultural dietary needs.

All children are encouraged to rest during the afternoon, and babies sleep according to their own individual needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a warm and child friendly environment. Photographs of children engrossed in their activities and their art and craft work are displayed throughout the nursery. Posters and photographs with labels in foreign languages develop children's positive attitudes. Therefore, all children feel valued and have a sense of belonging. Good security procedure are

in place to ensure that children are safely contained. All visitors are monitored as they are asked to sign in upon arrival and departure. Appropriate risk assessments to monitor children's safety are in place. However, procedures to monitor how babies move around freely and safely to promote their emotional well-being are not appropriately maintained, therefore babies safety may be compromised.

Children have access to a wide range of age appropriate resources which are well-maintained and comply with safety standards. Resources are stored on low units and are clearly labelled with pictures and words, thus promoting children's independent choices. They also have access to a range of resources which are selected for them during outdoor play to develop their physical skills safely.

Appropriate procedures to maintain children's safety when taking them for walks within the community are in place. Permission for parents is sought and staff ensure that they have all children's details with them. A risk assessment is made of the area, and staff take a travel first aid kit. Therefore, children remain safe when going out. They learn about road safety during their walks and through topic work. Children learn to keep themselves safe when on the premises as they are reminded to walk and line up safely. They learn the importance of manoeuvring ride on toys without endangering others, therefore developing their knowledge of staying safe.

Children are safeguarded by staff who have a sound knowledge and understanding of child protection and appropriate procedures are in place to ensure that any issues of concern are dealt with effectively.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled in a supportive and caring environment where relationships between adults and children are good. They engage in a wide range of age appropriate activities. Children are offered cuddles by staff who know them well and are able to respond to their needs. Babies are cuddled when being fed by their key worker this helps them to feel secure and build a relationship with a caring adult.

Babies enjoy exploring musical instruments such as banging tambourines and using shakers. They enjoy being sung to, and clap with enthusiasm as staff sing 'wind the bobbin up'. Babies are praised for their achievements, for example attempting to walk or crawl. One child is delighted as she takes her first step and all staff share this moment by applauding her. Some babies play contentedly in the sensory corner. Toddlers are familiar with basic routines and enjoy making their independent choices as they play, such as playing with the sand or engaging role play caring for a baby. Children are developing their communication skills well as staff listen carefully and encourage with enthusiasm.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have a sound knowledge of the foundation Stage and how children develop. They use the stepping stones to monitor each child's development and

plan accordingly. Information of children's starting points is provided by parents and their previous key workers; this is used to inform individual planning of activities to ensure that all children have covered their appropriate stage of development. Focussed observations are made to monitor the progress children are making along the stepping stones within the early learning goals. However, children are not accessing a balanced range of activities to ensure that all areas of learning are being covered. Consequently, children are not fully challenged in reaching their full potential.

Children are developing their physical skills as they move around with control. Their fine motor skills are extended as they learn to cut, write, paint and construct. Children are developing their independence as they manage their own personal hygiene; however their personal dignity and privacy are not fully respected. Children are very social and work well in groups. They negotiate effectively amongst their friends to construct a train track and build with bricks. They take pride in caring for each other and show this, for example one child built a house with small cubes for her friend who thanked her. Children are confident speakers and initiate conversation with adults and their peers. They enjoy being read to, listen with enthusiasm, and at the end of the story some children are keen to participate in group discussions adding their ideas. Children are delighted as they are offered praise for their achievements; this makes them feel valued.

Children enjoy developing their writing skills as they make marks in the writing area, some children confidently write their full names while other recognise the initial letter. All areas are well labelled with pictures and words to promote children's language skills. Children enjoy working with shapes and numbers. Staff are at hand to promote more complex ideas such as 'what do two semi-circles make', children guess correctly and are praised. They develop their counting skills as they play 'what's the time, Mr. Wolf?' in the playground. A group of children are excited as they compare size, and talk about who is the tallest and who is the smallest and follow the activity through to drawing around each other. Children enjoy participating in number rhymes and enjoy counting down to 'five little monkeys jumping on the bed'. They learn about positioning as they make lorries using pre-cut shapes.

Children have access to a computer and enjoy participating in supervised computer games. They learn about technology as they role play 'Bob the Builder' and pretend to fix the kitchen sink using a variety of tools. Children welcome visitors into the nursery, and extend their knowledge of people who help in the community. They learn to explore different materials as they play with sand and cornflour. They enjoy mixing cornflour with water and paint, and talk excitedly about the changes that occur when paint is mixed in. Children learn about the past and present during circle time as they talk about the weather, and some children talk of the weather news they watched on television in the morning. Their knowledge of other cultures and countries is promoted through posters and pictures in different languages, and through play resources.

Children use role play imaginatively. They enjoy playing in the home corner and extend their play to building and fixing. A group of children take it in turns to go for a walk and one child pretends to be a cat. Some children enjoy building a rocket out of small cubes. Children are given opportunities to be creative when making collages and creating pictures.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are greeted warmly by staff upon arrival. Babies are cuddled and sat with, while older children move onto their chosen activity in a warm friendly environment. Parents share information with staff informally about their children's evening at home which enables staff to be prepared to meet their individual needs during the day. Positive images of people and welcoming notices in different languages are displayed throughout the nursery. Children learn about other cultures through daily routine and festivals from around the world are covered in topic work. Consequently children develop a positive attitude towards other beliefs, respect others, and feel valued themselves. Staff have a good understanding of working with children with learning and/or physical disabilities, and the importance of sharing information with parents. Children with English as an additional language are fully supported into the setting. All children are given equal opportunities, and have equal access to all resources and activities, and therefore their individual needs are effectively met.

Children understand responsible behaviour because staff promote themselves as good role models. Staff provide a calm atmosphere and speak softly to children at all times. Children are encouraged to help each other; for example, one child asks another child if he would like a cup or jug to pour the cornflour mix, and he thanks her as she holds both out to him. Children help with tidying up and are thanked by staff. Therefore children learn right from wrong, and develop good self-esteem.

Information about the children's care, such as food intake, nappy changes and sleep are shared daily with parents. All information about daily routines and activities are displayed in each room. Parents reported that staff are very approachable and that they receive appropriate levels of information. The nursery has a complaints and procedures policy for parents. They are developing this to make parents aware that they can see this on request, and have developed a log system to include complaints made to Ofsted.

The partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is satisfactory. Parents receive some information about Foundation Stage and are invited to parents evening to share the progress their children are making. Parents receive a DVD with their information pack advising them of the curriculum that is followed by the nursery, and how it links with the Foundation Stage. Parents are made to feel very welcome, and share information verbally and informally with staff. Parents are informed of the topic children are working on through a daily notice board in the pre-school room. The provider uses parents' questionnaires to evaluate the nursery's effectiveness, which enhances the partnerships with parents and care for children.

The positive approach to promoting children's understanding of right and wrong, diversity in cultures and caring for others, helps to foster children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's care and welfare is generally well promoted. The provider has effective procedures in place to ensure staff working with children are suitably checked and hold appropriate qualifications. Children benefit from the high ratio of qualified staff which ensures that they are appropriately cared for. All staff are encouraged to update their knowledge and skills in childcare which helps to safeguard children. Overall, group sizes and staff deployment contribute to children's health, enjoyment, achievement and ability to take an active part in the setting. A comprehensive range of policies, procedures, and up to date records are in place to guide staff and provide reassurance for parents. However, procedures to monitor babies safety are not in place, which could put them at risk.

The leadership of management is satisfactory. The provider is committed to ensuring children receive high quality care and education. Staff feel fully supported by the manager, and receive regular appraisals. They work well together as a team. The manager has made good links with local advisors to develop their practice. However, procedures to monitor how children are accessing a balanced curriculum are not in place. Consequently, children may not be fully challenged in all areas of learning. Parents are invited to comment on how effective the provision is, and this is used appropriately to develop children's care.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to: develop staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection issues; ensure the play scheme/facilities and sleep room are maintained at a suitable state of cleanliness, and make the laundry facilities inaccessible to the children; ensure there is a system for recording the time of arrival and departure of children, and include bullying in the behaviour management policy; review the organisation of resources to allow children to operate independently; improve the planning and provision of the programme for physical development; increase opportunities for children to develop skills in every day situations; and review staff training to ensure all staff receive appropriate training for the Foundation Stage including systems for planning and assessments.

All staff working with children have developed their knowledge and understanding in child protection, and children are effectively monitored to ensure that they are safeguarded. The playscheme is now housed in a separate building, and a high door handle is fitted to the laundry room, thus ensuring that children are safe and that all areas are generally hygienically well maintained. The nursery has introduced an electronic number keying-in system for parents to monitor children's time of arrival and departure, which ensures that documents are appropriately maintained, and a bullying policy has been developed, which helps to safeguard children. Resources are now housed in storage baskets and clear plastic boxes are clearly labelled on low units, therefore enabling children independence in accessing their own resources. Some staff now have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage; however providing children with a broad and balanced curriculum to ensure physical education, and to increase opportunities for children to develop skills in every day situations is still ongoing.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since April 1 2004, Ofsted received one complaint relating to National Standard 2: organisation. This involved an allegation made about the staff to child ratios in June 2005. Ofsted investigated and found no evidence to substantiate the complaint. However, the provider had not informed Ofsted of some staff changes. Therefore, the provider was given an action under National Standard 14: documentation. This was to ensure Ofsted is informed of all significant changes including changes to staff. The provider remains qualified for 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

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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 to ensure babies move around freely and safely to promote their emotional well-being
- develop opportunities to provide challenge which extend children's physical development

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):

- develop procedures to ensure that children's dignity and privacy are fully respected
- Provide a balanced curriculum to ensure all areas of learning are covered on a daily basis

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk