



Rainbow Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	156077
Inspection date	07 February 2007
Inspector	Beryl Witheridge
Setting Address	Mierscourt Primary School, Silverspot Close, Rainham, Gillingham, Kent, ME8 8JR
Telephone number	01634 389889
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Registered person	Donna Cathrine Hackney
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Rainbow pre-school and Out of School Club opened in 2001 and is privately owned. It operates from three rooms in a purpose-built building on school premises in Rainham, Kent. A maximum of 28 children may attend the setting at any one time. The pre-school operates from 09.15 to 11.45 and 12.45 to 15.15. during term time. The breakfast and after-school clubs are open from 07.45 to 09.00 and from 15.30 to 17.30 during term time and 07.45 to 17.30 during the school holidays. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area and the school field.

There are currently 62 children aged from two to under five years on roll in the pre-school. Of these, 45 children receive funding for early education. There are 60 children from four to 11 years, in the out of school club, of these 38 are under eight years. Children come from a local catchment area. The provision currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties

and/or disabilities, and can support a number of children who speak English as an additional language. The out of school facility also welcomes children over the age of eight years.

The setting employs seven staff. Of these five, including the owner, hold appropriate early years qualifications and two members of staff are planning to undertake training towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are encouraged to have healthy hygiene routines and wash their hands after going to the toilet and before eating their snack. Staff support them with appropriate language reminding the children to wash their hands thoroughly. Children are able to be independent and take themselves to the bathroom. Worktops and tables are kept clean with the use of antibacterial sprays. Children who are ill are not able to attend, therefore, protecting other children from the spread of infection. Children benefit from appropriate procedures if they are taken ill, appropriate care is given in a quiet environment until their parents are able to collect them. The required accident and medication records are kept as well as written parental permission for seeking medical advice and treatment. A dentist visits the group once a year to talk to the children about healthy teeth, they each receive a toothbrush and toothpaste and a healthy tooth chart.

The pre-school children are provided with fresh drinking water and milk. Older children have squash after school, they requested this and staff agreed to sugar free squash. Children benefit from clear agreements with parents regarding food, which ensures their own specific dietary requirements are respected. Children talk about favourite foods; they are discussing milk and one child tells the staff member that it is important for bones, pointing to the picture of the skeleton on the door. Children are looking at healthy bodies as one of their talking and thinking books, staff help them to link these ideas seamlessly. As part of this children are looking at different fruits such as mango, melon and lychees; they are able to cut them up themselves and taste them.

Children are offered healthy choices regarding the food they eat; at snack time children are provided with fresh fruit of apples, oranges and bananas. After school children have pitta breads, wraps, cereal bars, and wholemeal toast with low sugar jams and fruit, they sometimes cook their own pizzas. On the day of the inspection they have baked potatoes with cheese and salad. Breakfast club children are offered cereals and toast.

Children are encouraged to learn about healthy lifestyles through planned activities and the daily routines. Staff introduce the children to Yoga to help them understand that they can exercise without having to get hot and bothered. They use a relaxing tape in the background and then staff and children try to get themselves into different positions, the children thoroughly enjoy themselves and put a lot of effort into this activity. Children show bodily awareness and begin to understand the effects exercise has on their bodies as they talk about feeling relaxed after their exercises, talk about their hearts beating fast and feeling a little bit warm. They have

plenty of room and daily opportunities to use large apparatus in a well supervised outdoor area. Fine motor development is good because children have many opportunities to use appropriate equipment and tools, such as pens, pencils, knives and scissors.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children have use of one large room with a secure outdoor play area, which is used daily. They have plenty of space to move around freely and make best use of the activities available. Children find the setting welcoming because it is purpose built, bright and welcoming. Their work is displayed throughout which enables them to feel proud of the work and achievements. The premises are safe and secure.

Children play with toys which are checked regularly for hygiene and safety, broken equipment is thrown away if it cannot be repaired. Toys are cleaned every Friday. There is a six week turn around on the toys and equipment. All conform to safety standards. The furniture and equipment used helps to promote an environment which is stimulating; toys are easily accessible and are age appropriate.

Children's welfare and safety is promoted through the emergency evacuation procedures which are carried out once every half term, over two or three sessions, to ensure that all children are included. Safe arrival and departure procedures are in place. A thorough written risk assessment is carried out daily by the member of staff who is responsible for Health and Safety, any issues are immediately addressed. The house rules for the children are displayed on the wall, these are discussed with the children and all children from the out of school club have signed up to them. Fire blankets and smoke alarms help to keep the children safe. Any hazardous materials or substances are kept locked away from the children.

Children's welfare is paramount and the child protection policy complies with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. The policy has recently been updated after a member of staff attended Safeguarding Children training. She fed back the information to all staff so that they are all aware of how to put the procedures into practice. A record of existing injuries and concerns is in place. Staff have the understanding that they must also keep themselves safe. The procedures to be followed in event of allegations against staff, students or volunteers are in place. The manager has the overall responsibility for instigating safeguarding children procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The pre-school is a very child-led environment. Staff and children have an excellent relationship. They enjoy each other's company and work extremely closely at all times throughout the day. The children enjoy the activities on offer. Young children enjoy being with each other as they join together in a group and sing songs about some of the toys they have brought in, such as a doll, 'Miss Polly had a dolly' and a dog 'How much is that doggy in the window'. Children's learning is extended by staff introducing them to different ideas and encouraging the children

to think about different concepts. They talk about 'how we grow'; the children think about being a baby and what happens next; 'you're a big girl' says one child, then staff ask what happens next, 'then you're a lady'. A parent brings a new born baby into the group for the children to see and to talk about the baby's needs. They ask questions about what a baby can do; one child asks 'do babies have bones?' The activities on offer on the same day are linked into the theme; water play is washing the dolls, looking at the best way to dry them, counting fingers and toes. Children enjoy social opportunities; they join together for group times where they talk and share. They have made pictures of themselves with photos of themselves for the faces. Their clothes represent what they like to do best, some are wearing football kits, some have roller skates and other brightly coloured clothes. Children show a high level of wellbeing and involvement as they eagerly take part in a variety of activities. Children have opportunities to investigate and explore through planned activities and free flow play where staff ask open questions to promote their thinking and responses. They have looked at wildlife and made a hedgehog, 'Spike', when they were discussing hibernation. Spike is taken home by the children where they take photographs of him and the activities they involve him in, such as eating or playing a trumpet. He has been on a visit to Berlin where he was 'toilet trained', had stories read to him, went to a different pre-school and went on a visit to New York. The children have made a book to record his adventures. Children are extremely proud of Spike and love sharing his adventures with visitors to the pre-school. The group has a high staff ratio which provides the children with a lot of adult interaction and support. There are good relations between the staff and the school, the school sends teachers into the pre-school to meet the children who are moving up and the children are able to regularly visit the school.

Older children arrive for the out of school club; they come happily and eagerly into the group. They have had 'book day' at school and are all dressed as different characters, they are in high spirits. Most immediately help themselves to a drink, and then they settle quickly into their chosen activity. The group ranges from four to 11 years but they mix well, some older children joining in games with younger children. A group are playing a board game; other children patiently wait their turn to take part in the game. Some want to make pictures of themselves as the younger children have done; they show enthusiasm and great enjoyment during this activity. Older children offer to help to prepare the tea and lay the tables. Toys and equipment for both the pre-school and the out of school club are easily accessible and children are able to self select and make choices. The atmosphere throughout the day is one of eager, enthusiasm and fun. The children are always fully involved and busy. There is no arguing or disagreement. It is a happy, busy, vital and purposeful environment.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. The staff have an excellent understanding and knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how young children learn which means the needs and interests of all children are being addressed. Opportunities to help them learn flow easily from the stage of development of the children and the pace they want to learn. They use the Claire Warden method of 'Talking and Thinking' which links effortlessly into the stepping stones and early learning goals. Children have 'Learning Stories' which records what they are doing in the group; these are regularly taken home and shared with parents. Plans are done on a daily basis leading from the evaluation of the activities of the day before. Evaluation is very clear and comprehensive and help to direct the plans. Stepping stone records are colour coded to

make it easier to identify how the children are moving forward. Staff identify weekly stepping stones, then link these into other evidence collected from the Learning Stories and Talking and Thinking books as well as staff observations. The plans are also linked to the Birth to three matters framework. Differentiation is used well to ensure that the needs of all children in the pre-school are being addressed. Assessment is thorough and well used. Children are progressing well in relation to stepping stones towards the early learning goals. They make very good progress in relation to individual starting points which are identified when they first start at the group. Children are extremely interested in teaching methods used which helps them to become focussed, to persist for some time and to try new tasks and skills; they are eager to learn. They thrive on being given new opportunities and are able to move forward in their learning at a fast pace. They are like sponges; they want to learn and are eager to look at new ideas and experiences. Progress is shown in all areas. Children are able to make as much progress as they can because staff use the needs of the children, the environment, resources and skills to extend and develop the children's minds and imaginations. They are constantly praised and affirmed by staff which raises their confidence and self-esteem. Children are offered a balanced range of activities and experiences across the six areas of learning which are suited to the needs of the children and reflect their own community as well as the world around them.

Children are becoming independent learners as they freely and confidently select from the toys and activities available. This is promoted by the staff who encourage them to try new ideas and to complete tasks. Children thoroughly enjoy their time at the setting and show interest and high levels of involvement because they have a positive attitude to learning and show this through asking questions, using their initiative and taking responsibility. Children manage their own personal hygiene; they visit the toilet and wash their hands, change their shoes and boots after playing outside in the garden and attempt to fasten their own coats when they go out.

Children are beginning to understand moral codes of their own and other cultures, to understand and respect the values and feelings of others and form harmonious relationships with both their peers and adults. Children can communicate well. They listen and take turns when speaking in small groups. Children show an appreciation of books and stories which are freely accessible. They sit and listen in a large group; they interact well and are able to answer the questions about the story of 'Titch'. They use language about size and shape, and staff introduce them to comparative language, such as big, bigger and small. They talk about musical instruments which they have used at the pre-school; staff remind the children how they marched around the garden when playing their drums. Many children can hold a pencil correctly and write recognisable words including their own names; some can recognise simple familiar words, such as other people's names. This is extended through environmental print such as shapes hanging from the ceiling with the words underneath, display boards identifying what the display is about such as 'our pets', wall displays with language to describe what the children intended the picture to be. Children are learning new vocabulary, for example, one child is looking at a book of the body with a younger child, she points to some of the pictures, when asked by a member of staff what the picture is, she looks at the younger child and tells her 'those are red blood cells', she is praised for remembering what they are. Children learn how to use numbers in everyday situations; they sit in small groups at snack time, they have a chart in front of them with numbers and questions on it. They use these to mark how many want water and how many want milk. The children count how many want each and then find the written number which matches that

number. Another child will collect the correct number of milk cartons required and bring them to their table. Children show that they understand size and shape through practical activities, such as one child cuts the banana for the children on their table at snack time, they are able to cut it into the correct number of more or less equal sized pieces. Opportunities to explore capacity through water and sand play are provided daily encouraging the children to think about measurements, capacity and volume.

Children investigate using their senses, while doing their exercises they hear a saw; staff ask them what it is. 'A tree chopper' says one child, they sit and watch through the window as the workmen cut some branches from the tree and then take the cut branches away. Children use a range of tools; when cooking they use tools to mix and cut the pastry when making jam tarts. They use knives to cut the fruit and scissors to make the figures of themselves. Children learn about living things through outdoor play, planting and growing seeds. Children explore the concept of communication with mobile phones, role play tills and the computer.

Children demonstrate a good awareness of space and move confidently, imaginatively and safely during physical activities such as doing the yoga exercises, or when dancing to the music. Children's fine motor skills are encouraged through activities, such as doing puzzles, cooking and art and crafts. Opportunities for physical activity include regular outdoor play; children build a den and go fishing, they use their imaginations to stimulate outdoor play. Children explore a range of texture, shape and form in different dimensions, such as art and craft activities, drawing their own pictures; one child describes his picture which is a circle, then he talks about the colours he has used. Children enjoy singing sessions and have a good repertoire of songs and action rhymes which they sing with enthusiasm.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children from all backgrounds and walks of life are welcomed into the group. They are treated according to their individual needs. Parents provide all the necessary information when their child first starts at the group, all relevant information is recorded on the children's information sheets. Children have access to resources which provide positive images of race, gender, culture, religion and disability. The children are starting to look at different languages and are learning words for hello, numbers, colours and food. They look at different festivals throughout the year and have been given an authentic Chinese costume which will be used when they are looking at Chinese New Year.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) are welcomed wherever possible and appropriate action taken for providing them with the correct care and support. Contact would be made with other agencies to meet the needs of the children as well as working in close partnership with parents. Individual Educational Plans would be put in place after discussion with parents, doctors and other professionals if it were required.

Staff attend in school reviews for children from the out of school club if there are concerns, so that they can work together to meet the children's needs. They believe that communication is very important. There is a good link between the group and the school when working with children who have LDD.

The behavioural boundaries are set through house rules which are displayed on the wall; these are discussed with the younger children and signed up to by the older children. Staff are extremely good role models. They treat all children and each other with respect. Staff manage children's behaviour in a way that promotes their welfare and development. The children's behaviour is of such a high standard that staff rarely have to deal with unacceptable behaviour although there are strategies in place should they be needed.

Children benefit from consistency of care because there is a close working relationship between the staff and the parents. Some parents need reassurance while others are quite happy to leave their children and step back, staff work with families to help them through home problems. Parents receive written information when they first start which sets out aims and objectives and information about 'US'. Parents visit the term before they start and then there is an open day for all new parents when the children first start. Parents are an important part of the setting and are asked to complete a questionnaire about the provision. Policies and procedures are available for parents to see in the entrance hall although staff need to ensure that the written information is correct and up to date such as the complaint's policy which does not contain the contact information regarding Ofsted. Newsletters are sent out once a term or more often if needed. A notice board in the entrance hall provides day to day information. The record of complaints is available to be shared with parents. Child information records are up to date and provide a complete historic record of each child.

The partnership with parents is outstanding. Children's developmental needs are promoted because staff ensure parents receive quality information about the curriculum, their children's progress and achievements. Information is shared through a termly review which records the child's progress; if there is anything parents want their child to learn they are able to highlight this. Developmental progress is recorded using stepping stones, Learning Stories, observations and Talking and Thinking. Parents felt taking their Learning Stories home was very positive especially for parents who are rarely able to visit the group. Parents are able to come into the group to talk to the staff at any time. If there was a concern then staff would ask the parent to come in so that they can talk to them. Care and education fall naturally together through the curriculum and the close partnership staff have with parents. Parents are encouraged to contribute to their children's learning by sharing their own knowledge, such as the parent who came into talk about her new baby, or the parent who provided x-rays for the children's healthy body theme. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The owner of the group has ensured that the staff caring for the children are suitably qualified to do so. Of the seven staff employed five hold relevant childcare qualifications and two are planning to undertake training. All staff hold a Criminal Records Bureau disclosure but the provider must ensure that the necessary details are kept on file. Staff are First Aid trained. The provider and staff continually risk assess the premises and supervise children at all times. Children's safety, welfare, care and learning are promoted very well by the effective policies and procedures which have been put in place by the group. These are well implemented by the staff. Ofsted are always notified of any changes to the group. The recruitment and vetting

procedures which are required when taking on staff in the future are in place but are not robust or rigorous enough to ensure that future staff are suitable to work with children.

Children benefit from space to move around, freedom to access and select from the toys and resources on offer, all of which are developmentally appropriate and meet the needs of the children attending. The record of attendance is up to date and shows clear arrival and departure times. It also records when and why a child is not present. Staff attendances are also recorded. Staff ratios are always maintained and are above the required minimum which provides the children with a lot of support and interaction.

All the required documentation is in place and is readily available for inspection. The provider has a good understanding of the documentation required to provide the children with a safe, secure and enjoyable environment. All information is confidentially kept and is safely stored. The registration certificate is clearly displayed in the entrance hall. The standard of written information is good and most has recently been updated but the provider must ensure that it is all up to date and contains the relevant information.

Leadership and management is outstanding. The owner has set a clear line for staff to follow. She has set definite direction to ensure that the organisation of care, nursery education and outcomes for children are being met. All staff are involved in the evaluation of the daily curriculum and the owner checks the overall success of the curriculum by being directly involved in the delivery. Evidence is collected from several sources and it is clear to see that the children are making good progress in all areas. All areas of the curriculum are being delivered consistently. There is a clear vision for all children, their wellbeing and achievements. Children are encouraged to learn and to direct their own learning; the provider gives all children the opportunity to develop at their own pace. Care and education are seamlessly integrated and the teaching methods used support and advance the children's learning. Staff are motivated through close involvement in all aspects of the pre-school, the planning, the delivery of the curriculum and the record keeping. Regular staff appraisals and self evaluations are carried out. These help to identify staff's strengths and any training needs which they require. The owner is very proactive and committed towards improving the quality of care and education, as are all the staff. The group receives support from the early years advisory teacher from the local authority.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group was asked to ensure that positive images of disability and gender are available to children. They have increased their selection of toys and equipment and children now have a wide variety of positive images around.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaint 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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

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):

- update the complaints policy to provide parents with the correct contact information for Ofsted
- ensure that a record is kept of staff's criminal records bureau checks
- review the recruitment and vetting procedures to ensure that they are rigorous and robust

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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