

Young Risers Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127794
Inspection date	12 February 2008
Inspector	Sarer Marcia Tarling
Setting Address	Downs Road, Istead Rise, Gravesend, Kent, DA13 9HG
Telephone number	01474 832205
E-mail	
Registered person	Young Risers Pre-School
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

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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Young Risers Accredited Pre School opened in 1993. It is run by a committee and operates from the annexe in Istead Rise Primary School. The setting has sole use of the classroom, an office and children's toilets and has its own secure outdoor area. The setting also has scheduled use of the school hall, a playground and playing fields.

The group is open from 09:00 to 15:00 five days a week during school term time only. Children may attend for the full day, morning or afternoon sessions. Children staying for the whole day are required to bring a packed lunch.

The setting is registered to care for up to 24 children aged two to five years. There are currently 40 children on roll. Of these 25 children are aged three and four and receive funding for nursery education.

There are eight members of staff, including the manager, who work directly with the children; of which seven staff members hold a relevant childcare qualification, or are working toward one. For example, the DPP (Developing Pre-school practice), BTEC, NVQ II and III and CPP

(Certificate in Pre-school practice). In addition the setting accommodates a number of students on work placement. The group has the Pre-School Learning Alliance Accreditation.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

There are good arrangements in place to promote children's health and well-being. Children benefit from the clear written policies which detail a range of procedures which help to ensure that the premises and equipment are maintained in a clean and hygienic condition. For example, dressing up clothes are regularly laundered and toys are often put through a dish washer. Children's health is safeguarded as staff are vigilant in ensuring bathroom areas are clean and tables are sanitised after messy activities and before snack time. Children take turns to help wipe clean and set the tables for snack time, learning that eating areas need to be clean to prevent the spread of germs.

Children learn about the importance of good personal hygiene. Older children are able to use the bathroom independently, affording them privacy, and understand why they must wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating. Children say they wash their hands, 'so I don't get germs'. This is also reinforced through the use of signs on the bathroom wall which remind children to flush the toilet and then wash their hands. Pump action liquid soap and paper hand towels help prevent cross infection. Staff follow stringent nappy changing routines and sensitively assist the younger children as they use the step stools and child-size toilet seats. Clean clothes are provided if children accidentally wet themselves. The dental hygiene service has visited the setting and has helped raise children's interest in personal hygiene.

There are good arrangements in place to exclude children with infectious illnesses and to care for children who may become unwell during the session. In the event of medication being required, permission is sought and a record is maintained. Children's health is effectively promoted as staff are well informed about individual health care issues and draw up care plans with parents. Children's welfare, in the event of an accident or emergency, is promoted. Several staff hold a certificate in first aid and procedures ensure there is an appropriately stocked first aid box in the setting and one available for outings. Written parental permission is in place for seeking emergency medical advice/treatment and there is a clear system in place for recording any accidents or incidents and records include a parental signature.

Children's physical well-being is promoted and they benefit from the many opportunities to be physically active. Children enthusiastically explore the outdoor environment on all but the worst weather days and take part in spontaneous vigorous activity in the fresh air. They enjoy kicking balls, and running, climbing and scrambling through tunnels. Children are learning to use wheeled toys, to throw frisbees and to catch beanbags with growing control. Children greatly enjoy taking part in adult initiated music and movement sessions in the school hall. Staff set up obstacle courses which challenge children to develop strength and coordination. Safety matting enables children to take safe risks and older children use this apparatus with confidence and show a good awareness of others. Staff support the younger children well, for example, as they walk beside a child trying out their skill on a balance beam. Children are able to rest and relax comfortably on sit and snooze chairs. However, arrangements for children who may require a sleep are not as effective and clean linen is not routinely provided.

Children enjoy a relaxed social snack time where they sit together with friends. They relish their mid morning snack which replenishes their energy levels until lunch time. Children have a choice of fresh milk or water to drink and most use small jugs to pour their own drinks. Children choose from a wide range of raw vegetables, fresh and dried fruits and have some opportunities to participate in the preparation of snacks as they help spread toppings on their crackers, muffins, wholemeal toast, tortilla wraps and pitta bread. Staff lay the foundations for healthy eating as they sit with the children and talk about healthy options. Children's well-being is safeguarded as information about specific dietary needs is obtained from parents and carefully recorded. Children bring a packed lunch with them and eat in the school hall. Staff are vigilant to ensure children do not swap food and monitor that what the children are eating is healthy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff work extremely hard to create a bright, stimulating and welcoming environment. This is enhanced through the use of posters, photos, mobiles and colourful displays of work which show the activities and experiences children are involved in. Staff are available to greet and chat to families as they enter and as a result, children separate from their parents positively showing that they are confident and secure in the setting.

Space is appropriately organised in defined areas which enables children to move around safely and independently. For example, access to individual coat hanging and personal storage boxes, a designated role play and book area, independent access to outside play and appropriate bathroom facilities. However the location of the nappy changing provision is less successful, as this consists of a changing mat on the floor in the staff toilet area. This means that staff have to kneel on the floor to change nappies. Staff are vigilant in ensuring toys and equipment are safe and suitable to promote children's safety recognising that materials suitable for older children may pose a risk to younger/less mature children. For example the tap-a-shape pin tacks. Children have access a wide range of good quality resources which are well organised in clearly labelled boxes and storage units. Children use corresponding cards, which they stick onto a 'choosing board', which have written and picture labels of all the toys and activities they can take part in. This helps to encourage decision making and develop independence skills from a very young age. Older children know exactly where to find what they need to support and extend their play. Children cheerfully help staff to clear away resources at tidy-up time and this encourages them to take some responsibility for their own safety and the safety of their peers.

Staff pay very good attention to children's safety. A comprehensive termly risk assessment is undertaken along with daily safety checks, both indoors and outside, to make sure that the premises, furniture and resources are safe and suitable for children to use. This helps to identify and deal with any potential hazards and ensures children's ongoing safety by minimising accidental injury. In addition staff carry out, and document, a risk assessment for all outings. Children's early attention to road safety is introduced during role play in the outdoor area and whilst they walk to local shops and other areas of interest in the community. Furthermore, staff make use of local services such as the community police and fire department to visit the children, chat to them about their role and potential dangers. Craft work, in connection with bonfire night, helps children understand the dangers of fire and this helps to reinforces children's understanding of their own safety. Regular fire drills help children become familiar with the procedures so they learn how to leave the premises quickly and safely in the event of a real emergency.

Children are safeguarded and protected from potential harm because all staff have attended training and demonstrate that they are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of possible abuse and/or neglect. The manager ensures there is up-to-date information and refers to guidance in Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. As a result the setting is aware of the procedures they must follow and there is a system in place to refer any concerns to the appropriate agencies. However, the child protection policy is out of date as it does not refer to Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. Children benefit from good security on the premises. Staff are vigilant at all times, supervising the children indoors and outdoors effectively. Clear procedures ensure children only leave the premises with a suitable adult. Details are recorded in the child's contact book or a secure password is required if someone unfamiliar is collecting a child. Staff ensure that all visitors sign the visitor book and visitors are supervised by vetted staff to ensure that children are safe at all times.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Emphasis is placed on young children learning through their own first hand experience, discovery and exploration. As a result they spend the majority of their time freely exploring their chosen activities and are encouraged in this because many resources are accessibly stored. For example, a child chooses to do some drawing and helps them self to scissors, a hole punch and stapler, another locates some small world figures to play with on the car mat. Children are also encouraged to participate in group story and circle times and some planned focus activities. For example, children made a black crow 'Junk Bird', using recycled materials, for a competition at a local garden centre. Staff respond to children's needs by supporting them in their chosen play. They do so with skill and consideration for children's individual needs and stage of development. They are skilled at judging whether they need to offer help or when it is better to stand back and observe children. For example, when the children are rolling dough and using cutters to make shapes and when they are persevering to do their own coats up.

Staff are skilled at engaging children's interest and bringing a clear focus to the activities provided. They adapt activities, either by extending them or simplifying them, so that children at various stages of development enjoy them and enthusiasm is sustained. For example, when learning about the life cycle of a chick some of the children just wanted to colour the pictures while others wanted to know about different coloured eggs and how easily they crack. Children make the most of the floor space to spread themselves out, working together to complete an endangered animal floor puzzle. Staff talk and listen to children and engage them in frequent chatty conversations. One child talked enthusiastically about dinosaurs and knew they were 'extinct'. Staff ask lots of open ended questions to make children think and to extend their language development and learning.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children plan and select what they play with and decide how they spend the majority of their time. Most staff use the Foundation Stage guidance effectively and consequently, children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. The planning systems in place also ensure that children enjoy a varied and balanced range of focus activities. All staff contribute in the planning process which consist of long, medium and short term plans. They are based around topics such as, 'Weather and the Environment', 'Growth and Ourselves', 'Living Creatures, Land and Sea'. Staff observations and activities are evaluated and then pulled together by the manager who draws up the plans to include the next steps in children's learning.

Children develop a positive attitude towards learning because staff are enthusiastic in their work; using praise and encouragement and building children's confidence and self-esteem successfully by discussing and acknowledging the contributions of all the children. Children show good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Friendships are forming, children play in small groups and relate well to each other, engaging in play and conversation. Children are developing good self help skills for example, during role play they dress and undress themselves and put their own shoes on at home time. Staff use resources such as 'A box full of feelings' to help children express their own feelings and show an understanding of the needs and feelings of others. Children are extremely well behaved. They are familiar with the rules and are able to take turns and share during games such as dominos and listening lotto.

Children use the role-play area to dress up and play imaginatively based on their own experiences. For example, children play at having their hair done at the hairdressers, making someone better in the hospital and serving food at a restaurant. Children have opportunities to use musical instruments to make up their own music and enjoy singing familiar songs. They use a range of resources such as pallets, rollers, eye droppers, pads and sponges to experiment with paint and have opportunities to use a variety of mediums such as, corn flour, chalk, pasta shapes, junk, sticking, sequins, and glitter. As a result, children are able to explore their own creativity.

Children enjoy listening to stories individually and in groups. Staff use puppets and props to encourage children to join in and talk about what is happening. For example, whilst reading 'Home Sweet Home' the children eagerly made suggestions as to where the ladybird should live. Staff use books to support topic work for example, by looking at 'C is for China' as part of Chinese New Year. Parents are encouraged to become involved with their children's reading through the Book Start Treasure Box Scheme and children enjoyed dressing up as a favourite book character on World Book Day. This encourages children to see books as a source of pleasure and enjoyment. Children have opportunities to speak in small and large groups and recall previous events such as a walk near the woods. Many children are able to recognise their name from their name card and there are lots of opportunities for mark making, to attempt writing for a purpose and form recognisable letters. For example, children use appointment books in the role play area, write and issue pretend parking tickets in the outside area and some children are able to write their own name on their work. Displays are clearly labelled with some notices also written in French and the children are learning to say 'Bonjour' when the register is taken. Staff are introducing letter sounds to children, encouraging them to find words that begin with a chosen letter of the week or words relating to a topic.

Children are offered a good range of resources to develop their physical skills. Children show great dexterity as they are able to use a range of tools and equipment, such as scissors, pens, paintbrushes, rollers, cutters, with growing skill and confidence and this helps to develop their fine motor and co-ordination abilities. Children enthusiastically participate in sports day along with the reception children in the school. Children work cooperatively as they play games with the large parachute and take turns on the trampoline. Fabrics and scarves are used by children in music and movement to help them to express and respond to sound patterns.

Children are eagerly developing their understanding of numbers through the use of equipment to support early counting and number recognition. They are using simple mathematical language and records show they have a knowledge of time, space, shapes and measure. For example, children use scales to weigh objects, they investigate and discover capacity exploring the properties of water and ice, and use mirrors to see how symmetry works. After reading

'Scarecrows Secret' children use geometric shapes to make a scarecrow. Their understanding of simple addition, subtraction and weight is promoted during practical activities, such as pairing and counting wild animals and through craft activities such as making a display of 'Mrs Mopples Washing Line' and then using the props to add 'one more' or 'one less'. Children are developing their use of appropriate language, for example, when building towers with Lego they compare 'taller' and 'higher' and 'shorter' and 'lower'.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is well promoted as children have access to a wide range of resources which encourage them to explore and investigate. Such resources include water, sand, magnifying glasses, binoculars and magnets. The computer is available throughout the session and introduces children to technology. As a result they show good control with the mouse and are able to follow on screen instructions, as they use the 'Gigglebies' computer game, without the support of an adult. Children are taken on outings to buy stamps at the post office and visit Meopham Windmill where they enjoy a picnic. Photos enable children to talk about activities and to remember past experiences and events. For example, when they played in the snow and made a snowman, and when they released tadpoles into the school pond. Children gain an understanding of the wider world as they have opportunities to find out about a number of different festivals throughout the year. For example, children learning about Chinese New Year have created a colourful display and enjoyed eating noodles. When a child found a caterpillar in the outside area, staff used the opportunity to talk about the life cycle of a butterfly and children enjoyed drawing pictures and looking at books such as 'The crunching, munching caterpillar'. Children benefit from the good opportunities to learn about nature and the environment as they grow a variety of plants and flowers in the outside area and hang bird feeders in the trees so they can observe the birds and squirrels.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff are approachable and friendly and clearly understand the benefits of good partnerships with parents. All parents are welcome to become members of the active committee which runs the setting. Effective systems are in place to share information and involve parents. These include a notice board and regular newsletters which inform parents of social events such as Race, Pamper and Curry Nights. Newsletters include information on topics for the term so parents can support children's learning at home. All parents are invited to the settings annual general meeting. A parent rota enables them to take part in the session and offers the opportunity to observe how staff plan for and support children's learning. Parents receive a prospectus, containing general information and policies and procedures when their child first starts. Parents are made aware of the complaints procedure via the prospectus however, the information lacks some detail and the contact telephone number for Ofsted is incorrect. Although the prospectus does not include information relating to the Foundation Stage curriculum parents receive some good quality information on this when their child becomes eligible for nursery education funding. Parents know their children's observations and progress records are readily available and are sent home each half term so parents can read about the activities the children have been doing and the areas of learning these relate too. The setting regularly uses questionnaires to gain parents views about the service they are providing. Parents comment on how friendly and approachable staff are, how settled their child is and the good choice of activities.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. There are extremely good systems in place to ensure that children settle well when they first start. This includes seeking a detailed history from parents and offering a home visit prior to the child starting.

During this period parents become familiar with their child's key member of staff giving them ample opportunity to discuss how the setting operates and the care their child will receive. As a result children's individual needs and background are valued and respected by the staff who use their knowledge of each child to guide their care. Children learn about the environment by studying topics connected to the seasons and discuss changes in weather. A pond life display enables children to look through magnifying glasses providing fascination as they begin to notice different markings on insects, stones and other natural objects. Sponsored bike rides, bounce-a -thons and teddy bear walks involve children in raising funds their immediate and wider community, raising their awareness of the needs of others.

Children are learning to value and respect each other as they explore and find out about others in the wider community. Staff set up a selection of displays, interest tables and activities which help children find out about how other people live. For example, festivals such as Chinese New Year, Divali and Easter which enhances their early understanding of different cultures. Diversity is acknowledged and promoted through the use of multicultural resources such as dual language books, posters, puzzles, dressing up clothes, cooking utensils and play food in the role play area. Staff demonstrate a non-sexist approach to children's play and all children enjoy equal access to all activities and resources. For example, three girls were engrossed in a game with toy cars while a boy played hairdressers, using rollers in his friends hair.

The setting has an inclusive approach and children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are welcomed. Staff make observations of all children's development and any concerns identified are sensitively shared with parents. The manager and special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) liaise with parents and external agencies to ensure all staff receive guidance in how best to support children. For example by gathering expertise from the Area SENCO, speech therapists and health visitors.

Children show caring attitudes towards others in the group, who relate well with each others and as a result positive relationships are forming. For example, the older children help the younger ones on with their shoes, coats and gloves. They openly share experiences of their home life during circle time, demonstrating a sense of community amongst their peers. Staff use rhymes such as 'Fingers on lips, hands in the air, lets have quiet everywhere!' to bring children to order. Children behave very well and older children remind each other of the rules. For example, one child told another, 'You must share the cars. Can I have one please?'. Staff are good role models and children's social skills are developing because staff encourage them to have good manners, for example, they remind them to say please and thank you at snack time. Staff speak calmly to the children and clearly explain social rules. As a result children are learning right from wrong. Children's self-esteem is fostered as staff routinely praise them and recognise their achievements.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children are protected as the committee has procedures in place for the suitable recruitment and vetting of all new staff. The manager ensures that all staff receive a full induction and that children are never left alone with un-vetted adults. Staff are supported in their work through an appraisal system and ongoing training is actively encouraged, promoting their professional development and ensuring their on-going suitability. All of the staff, with the exception of one, hold a recognised childcare qualification, or are working toward one.

The premises are well organised so children feel secure and comfortable. Children know what is coming next in the day as photographs and times clearly show the daily routine. Staff follow clear rotas and routines to ensure children's health and safety. Excellent adult to child ratios and effective deployment ensure children receive plenty of time and, where necessary, individual attention. Interaction between staff and children is excellent and this helps children gain in confidence and self esteem. The setting complies with their certificate of registration and the daily attendance record consolidates this. The registration certificate is displayed in line with regulations. Regulatory documentation for the safe running of the provision is in place, available for inspection and confidentially stored. The manager and committee ensure all policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated. However, some lack the necessary detail to ensure that all information shared with staff and parents, is accurate.

Leadership and Management is good. The success of the setting is a result of the strong relationship between the committee, manager and staff. They incorporate their experience to produce a clear vision and positive approach in providing good opportunities in order that children achieve. The manager has full delegated responsibility for the day to day management of the setting and continually strives to improve the quality of care and education for children by accessing training and is currently working toward an Early Years Professional Status qualification. All staff contribute in the detailed observing of children, offer suggestions regarding the planning of the curriculum and to the monitoring and evaluation of the activities and effectiveness of the nursery education programme. Regular staff meetings help ensure all staff are up-to-date with policies and procedures and enable staff to discuss and evaluate their observations of children's progress. The setting draws up their own annual 'Action Plan' which identifies areas for improvement and is used as a tool to monitor and evaluate any action taken.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection two recommendations were made to improve the standards of care provided. As a result, the committee has devised a record keeping system which ensures staff files are kept up-to-date, contain all of the relevant information and are available on the premises. Although the child protection procedure was updated to comply with procedures, regulations have since changed and, as detailed in this inspection report, further updates are now required.

Following the last nursery education inspection there were no significant weaknesses to report however, the setting now uses observations of children's development to plan for children's next steps. As detailed in this inspection report staff's involvement in planning still requires some consideration.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection 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 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 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 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):

- improve sleeping arrangements for children and protect them from cross infection by ensuring clean linen is available at all times
- review the facilities and improve arrangements for changing children's nappies to ensure they meet the needs of young children effectively and promote staff's health and safety
- ensure the child protection policy is updated to refer to Local safeguarding Children Board procedures
- ensure the complaints procedure for parents is updated in line with regulations set out in the guidance to the National Standards, revisions to certain criteria October 2005. Ensure the correct contact details for Ofsted are included in the procedure

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 staffs knowledge and understanding in the area of evaluating children's observations and progress. Provide opportunities for all staff to contribute to the drawing up of plans which include children's next steps in learning (Also applies to Care)

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