



Ravenscar Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	317397
Inspection date	14 November 2005
Inspector	Karen Ling
Setting Address	8 Eden Street, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA3 9LR
Telephone number	01228 530520
E-mail	
Registered person	Emmy Sealey
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?

Ravenscar Kindergarten first opened in 1988. It is a privately owned day nursery located in the Stanwix suburb of Carlisle, north of the city centre. It operates from a purpose built two storey building adjoining the owner's private residence and has an enclosed garden to the rear of the property. It serves the locality and areas beyond the city with many parents commuting to Carlisle for work purposes. Children move on to a range of primary schools.

Ravenscar is open from 08.30 to 17.30 on weekdays for 50 weeks of the year. It is registered for a maximum of 44 children from 2 to 8 years of age. There are currently 95 children on roll of which 40 are in receipt of funding for nursery education. The provision supports children with special educational needs and English as an additional language.

Ten staff work directly with the children. The majority hold appropriate qualifications in childcare and education. The Manager and one of the three deputies hold a level four qualification. The nursery also receives qualified teacher support from the local authority.

Ravenscar is a member of the National Day Nurseries Association and the British Association for Early Childhood Education and has achieved the Quality Counts accreditation award.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children show a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy, for example as they follow good hygiene routines with little or no reminders from staff. They are motivated and interested in a broad range of physical activity which they clearly enjoy.

The 2 and 3-year-olds take an interest in the good range of activities on offer to them and cope well with new challenges. They learn about their bodies and what they can do, for example as they copy adults and listen to the music and movement tapes. They confidently move in and around the indoor and outside areas and negotiate space well. They are developing an awareness of hygiene and the very good support from staff enables them to learn how to do things for themselves, such as how to use the toilet and wash hands afterwards. They enjoy a wide variety of activities where they can express their feelings, for example, as they explore lentils and potpourri.

The older children really enjoy their time outside. They join in ring games under the covered area and show a good knowledge of a range of games. They also enjoy using wheeled toys and a selection of small and large equipment which help them to become skilful in a range of movements. Staff are very good at developing children's play because of their excellent interaction. Children understand the need to follow hygiene routines and explain to others that they need to wash their hands "to get all the germs off".

Children bring their own lunch each day. Staff ensure food is kept fresh by placing a cool pack inside each lunch box. Children enjoy a wide range of healthy and nutritious snacks during the morning and afternoon sessions which include fruit and raw vegetables. They take it in turns to choose what the snack will be and as they become more able, they prepare the food also.

Relationships with adults are very good and the key worker system ensures

individual needs are met. Children's emotional wellbeing is promoted well because of THE staff's high levels of interaction with the children.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in the setting which is warm and welcoming. Children's safety is given high priority and staff show a high level of awareness and help children to learn about keeping safe. Practitioners are knowledgeable and follow the setting's comprehensive policies and procedures to protect children and promote their wellbeing. Risk assessments are carried out within the environment and prior to taking children on outings to identify and minimise risks. For example, comprehensive preparation went into making sure that children were kept safe during their recent trip to the Tullie House Museum in Carlisle. Effective systems are in place to monitor entry to and from the kindergarten. Children are well protected by staff who have a clear understanding of child protection policies and procedures which are in line with the local Area Child Protection Committee procedures.

Resources and furniture are arranged in a way that enables children to access resources easily and move around freely. Staff monitor the numbers of children using each area carefully as they move from one activity to another to ensure that they have sufficient space at all times.

The very young children develop a warm and caring relationship with their key worker. They are helped to develop friendships, using language to express their needs because of the skilful interaction and support from staff. They show increasing confidence as they share with others and are able to let others know how they feel.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy coming to the setting. Staff consistently interact well with children. As a result they build very good relationships with them and help them to feel settled and happy. Children relate well to each other and engage in a wide variety of interesting activities. The recent introduction of the Birth to three matters framework is having a positive impact on the quality of provision for children under 3. Staff plan and monitor young children's development effectively, ensuring that they provide sufficient and varied choice. For example, children experiment with different types and sizes of balls when they explore marble painting. Children are interested and persevere, for example, as they complete puzzles and staff recognise when they are ready for more challenge. All children spend their time purposefully as they choose from the choice of books, toys and table top activities on offer. They particularly enjoy singing and dancing to taped music and songs.

Children's language develops well and they are beginning to form simple and comprehensive sentences. They enjoy exploring in the role play areas and show initiative as they use resources from different areas to extend their own ideas. They

enjoy exploring materials such as lentils, sand, potpourri and water and show increasing dexterity as they manipulate tools and equipment. Young children achieve well because staff provide good role models, interact well with children and give the necessary support.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a secure understanding of all areas of children's learning. This allows them to create a rich and challenging learning environment overall. Occasionally planned activities provide limited opportunities for children to problem solve and build on their own ideas because resources do not provide sufficient challenge for all children. Staff plan adequately to ensure the whole curriculum is covered and explored in sufficient depth. The interactions with children are very effective. Staff involve themselves in children's play and maintain good dialogue asking questions to encourage them to find things out and talk about what they are doing.

Children are keen to learn, engage in play well and are eager to try out new experiences, such as writing letters in shaving foam. They know and follow the routines of the day well and show confidence as they approach adults to ask questions or talk to them about something they have done. Behaviour is very good because adults act as good role models and set clear boundaries. Children show developing independence and manage themselves well in matters of dress and as they choose and pour their own drinks at snack time. Their speaking and listening skills develop well. At circle time they take turns to speak and patiently listen to others as they wait for their turn. They recognise some letters by shape and sound and staff reinforce learning in fun ways. They particularly enjoy singing and at times children can be heard singing spontaneously and making up their own songs. They regularly sing number rhymes and competently manage simple calculation as they add and take away one. Staff make these activities fun by providing props such as green bottles and teddy bear hats for children to wear as they act out the songs and rhymes. Children enjoy listening to stories and show a developing awareness that print carries meaning. They like to use writing tools during role play to 'make notes' and 'take telephone messages' for example.

They enjoy a good range of experiences which help them develop an awareness of the wider community. They have been learning about past and present and recently visited a museum to learn about how toys have changed over the years. They attended a memorial ceremony at the cenotaph in the city and laid a poppy wreath which they had made. They develop an awareness of caring for others. Children and their parents have collected items to fill shoe boxes and they took part in raising money for charity by spending the day in their pyjamas. They also learn how to care for animals such as the birds, fish and rabbits which they look after at the kindergarten. Children have been learning about animals that hibernate. They have made a hibernation box for a hedgehog and tortoise, used a paper shredder to make the bedding to keep them warm, and regularly check them to make sure they are alright, even though they are only toy ones.

Children enjoy role play and use their imagination well to make up games, for example, in the shop. Staff provide a wide range of media for children to explore.

They have been looking at Monet's painting of poppies and made their own interpretations using finger painting. Staff enable children to investigate in fun ways. For example, the water is sometimes coloured and interesting objects are added. During the inspection a child was heard to exclaim excitedly " There are crocodiles in the water!"

Staff make regular observations of children to assess what they can do and the progress they are making in relation to the stepping stones and early learning goals. As a result, staff get to know and support each child well, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language. As yet records of assessment gained prior to children beginning the Foundation Stage are not used effectively to establish children's starting points.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's confidence and self-esteem is nurtured well because staff make learning interesting, fun and involve children effectively. Staff value children and their contributions and give regular praise and encouragement. As a result behaviour throughout the provision is very good. There are appropriate systems in place to support children with special needs and English as an additional language and dialogue with parents is informative. Children's awareness of diverse backgrounds is positively promoted through a range of suitable resources, outings and visitors. Parents are invited into the setting and children enjoy hearing about and have first hand experiences of different aspects of culture, dress and religion.

Routines follow children's needs, for example, children are able to rest when they are tired. Older children confidently pull up cushions to make themselves comfortable, while staff help younger children to rest or sleep. All children confidently move around their space and show care for each other as they play together, for example, as they take turns and share. They also learn to consider the needs of animals as they help to look after the birds, fish and rabbits. They play alongside attentive adults who provide a positive and nurturing environment. The needs of all children who attend the setting are met well. The provision fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff have created a friendly atmosphere where parents feel welcome to take part in activities. For example, several accompanied children and staff to the museum and as they observed the Remembrance Day service in the city. They support the provision well and contribute to fund raising events. They are provided with a very good range of information and parents speak positively about the effective exchange of formal and informal information. As well as receiving written information, they are also invited along to parent evenings where they can discuss how well their child is developing and the progress they are making at the provision. There is a complaints procedure in place, but as yet it does not contain all the necessary detail following the recent revisions to the National Standards.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is enhanced by the very good organisation and the ongoing professional development of staff. Staff work well together as a team and all are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Policies and procedures are individual to the setting and fully support the practice of knowledgeable and skilled practitioners. Staff are committed to protecting children, promoting their wellbeing and supporting their individual potential. Following the recent revisions to the National Standards, the policy and procedure for vetting and recruitment are not sufficiently rigorous. Effective practice and resources together with practical support and interaction from staff ensures that the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management are good. This ensures the effective implementation of the Foundation Stage. Staff who deliver nursery education meet regularly to plan and monitor the quality of provision. They are clear about their roles and responsibilities and ensure the smooth day-to-day running of the provision. They are committed to ongoing professional development and reflect on the advice of colleagues from the local school and Early Years Service.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provision was asked to improve two aspects of safety. A handrail has been fitted to the staircase and this now ensures children can mount and dismount the stairs safely with support. In the garden staff continue to ensure that children are never left unsupervised. Consequently the raised concrete bird bath is not seen to pose a hazard.

The last inspection identified two points for consideration. Staff now include differentiation at the planning stage and use evaluations to move children on to the next steps in their learning. Children receive regular opportunities to use information and communication technology because staff plan an interesting variety of activities which incorporate additional resources, such as a laminator, photocopier and shredder, as well as the computer and battery operated toys.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the April 2004.

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):

- ensure the complaints procedure complies with the new regulation
- ensure there are rigorous vetting and recruitment procedures in place to make sure that those who work for you or live on the premises where you provide day care are suitable for both employment and to work or be in regular contact with young children

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):

- ensure adult planned activities are resourced sufficiently at all times so that all children receive appropriate challenge, are encouraged to think, problem solve, and develop their own ideas, for example during small world play
- develop the continuity of progression; use the information gained from 'Birth to three' assessments so that it is used to establish starting points in terms of the Foundation Stage and helps children move to the next stage in their learning.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk