

Rowan Tree Day Nursery

9 Guessens Road, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, AL8 6QW

Inspection date	09/04/2013
Previous inspection date	20/05/2010

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	1
	Previous inspection:	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		1

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is outstanding

- The indoor and outdoor environments are rich with opportunities for learning. They are very thoughtfully planned to allow children to explore, investigate and develop considerable confidence as learners.
- Children demonstrate significant levels of independence for their age because staff have high expectations and give them every opportunity to do things for themselves. Consequently, children develop a really positive attitude to managing their personal care and making decisions.
- Children build exceptionally strong relationships and are emotionally prepared for change because arrangements for settling them in and supporting their progression through the nursery and on to school are highly effective.
- Partnerships with parents, other providers and outside agencies are extremely effective and make a significant contribution to ensuring the needs of all children are met.
- Exceptionally strong team work and professionalism is evident at all levels of the staffing structure. The staff communicate and support each other extremely well when working with the children to maintain high levels of achievement and enjoyment for all.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the four main rooms and the garden.
- The inspector made a joint observation with a team leader of a science activity in the garden with a group of two-year-old children.
- The inspector examined children's assessment records and planning documentation.
The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of practitioners
- working with children and read the provider's self-evaluation form and improvement plans.
- The inspector spoke with parents on the day and took account of their views recorded in documentation.

Inspector

Hilary Preece

Full Report

Information about the setting

Rowan Tree Day Nursery registered in 2001 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in the centre of Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, and is managed by The Childbase Partnership. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from a two-storey building with stairs and there is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The nursery employs 33 members of childcare staff. Of these, 22 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and nine at level 2.

The nursery opens Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 115 children attending who are within the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- enhance children's desire to investigate and think critically, for example, by modelling to children a sense of curiosity in what might happen when encountering new experiences and activities.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Children show high levels of engagement and motivation as they play. Staff provide extremely stimulating and well-resourced indoor and outdoor environments which enable children to explore and select resources with significant confidence and curiosity. For example, musical instruments are displayed in an appealing and accessible way to encourage children's interest in using them. A toddler is fascinated with a concertina instrument and repeatedly squeezes the bellows to listen to the sound it makes, responding with a beaming smile each time. He concentrates deeply as he makes the link between his actions and the sound. He then moves on to using other instruments and works out whether they need to be shaken or tapped with a stick to hear the sound. Older children confidently select whatever materials that appeal to them from the wide range available as they develop their own ideas when making and decorating play dough shapes and models. They talk with clarity and confidence about the patterns they make with

beads and feathers in the play dough and staff who sit alongside skilfully consolidate and extend their learning and thinking. There are significant opportunities for children to explore how things work as they see and use technology in the environment. These range from using old computer keyboards and telephones to operating an interactive white board. Staff build their understanding by allowing them to take photocopies of their pictures to include in their learning records.

Children become effective communicators because staff model language clearly and make good use of questioning. They very effectively use props and visual aids, such as puppets or sign language, to capture children's attention and engage their listening. A young child develops her conversational skills by saying the puppets are her brother and sister. Such activities are also used on a one-to-one basis to help children with specific needs to develop their attention, understanding and speaking. Parents of children with English as an additional language are encouraged to provide photographs and information about their country of origin which staff make into laminated books for children to talk about. Children hear and use key words in their home language because staff include these in displays and signs. This helps them to become confident in speaking both their home language and English.

Older children listen intently during group activities, such as stories and games, and are keen to express their thoughts and knowledge. There is a very thought-provoking discussion about the difference between sunset and sunrise with children commenting that 'I saw a sunset when the sun went down' as they examine photographs. Children sit nicely and participate enthusiastically in a group story because the staff member maintains their interest and develops their thinking by encouraging them to anticipate the rhyming words in the text. They work cooperatively to assemble a giant snakes and ladders puzzle with staff encouraging them to think what number comes next in the sequence and how to identify larger numerals. They remain focused on the task for a considerable period of time. Children, therefore acquire a wide range of skills and a very well-developed capacity for future learning in school.

Staff have a very in-depth knowledge about the children's needs and interests based on their frequent observations and discussions with parents. They use this to plan exciting activities which children enjoy and which contribute to their rapid progress in learning and development. Occasionally, however, staff do not fully extend children's desire to investigate or to think critically. For example, during a science experiment to make exploding rockets using a fizzy drink and mints, the staff focus a little too much on the end result rather than building children's curiosity in predicting what might happen. However, in the majority of cases activities are challenging and executed well. Parents are actively encouraged to support their children's learning by attending 'stay and play' sessions and by viewing and contributing to their children's learning journey records at regular intervals. These provide opportunities for parents to be updated about their children's progress and to gain an understanding of what is learned from typical activities.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

The nursery staff make the settling-in process for babies and new starters as smooth as possible by gathering detailed information from parents about children's routines and particular needs. The key person offers plenty of reassurance to children and parents, particularly to those that find separation difficult, which strengthens relationships and partnership working. This is supported by using delightful 'family books' and displays of family photographs which help children feel emotionally secure. Regular professional dialogue with parents continues as they progress through the nursery so that staff are updated about children's changing care needs. Parents of children with specific needs are exceptionally well involved in sharing information and ideas about how to adapt the environment and equipment appropriately. As children approach the time of moving on to the next room in the nursery, there are frequent opportunities to visit and become familiar with new environments and bond with key people. Staff provide plenty of activities to emotionally prepare older children for the transition to school. These include working cooperatively in small groups to listen to stories or play board games. Children politely say 'excuse me' before speaking in a group which reminds them of the importance of listening to others and waiting their turn. Stories about behaviour are used sensitively and skilfully to help children explore their feelings and understand expectations. Consequently, children demonstrate mature understanding and thinking which equips them very well for making new relationships in school.

All children thrive because they have so many opportunities to be active outdoors, whatever the weather. They have access to spacious garden areas that offer a wealth of versatile activities and open-ended resources to promote confident physical skills and exploration. For example, having observed their natural curiosity in climbing on tyres, the staff encourage children to re-organise them in different ways and add steps, beams and blocks to make an obstacle course. Children use this to practise climbing, balancing and jumping from a height while being guided as required by staff. Activities such as this enable them to gain confidence and control in movement while taking risks in a controlled and secure environment. Babies wear protective suits so that they can crawl and toddle about safely on artificial grass. This enables them to explore open spaces and gain considerable confidence in moving.

Children's health and personal care is promoted extremely well. They benefit from eating well-balanced meals that meet their nutritional needs and individual dietary requirements. Menus are planned in consultation with a dietician and health advisor and focus on 'eating a rainbow' of different coloured fruit and vegetables. This introduces them to a broad range of healthy foods. Daily routines are skilfully managed to enable children to take responsibility for doing things for themselves. An example of this is children's mealtimes. Older children know why it is important to wash their hands before eating, then fetch cutlery and plates, find their place mat, serve their own food and pour drinks competently. Younger children manipulate spoons effectively so that they can feed themselves and are keen to help clearing away and wash their hands afterwards under guidance from staff. This means children rapidly become independent and develop a positive attitude to managing their personal care.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

Leadership is strong and highly effective. Despite some recent challenges brought on through changes to management, the senior staff members have maintained stability and led the staff exceptionally well. They are ably supported by the company management. Staff are very supportive of each other and communicate effectively throughout the day. This ensures routines run seamlessly with minimal disruption to children. Teams within the rooms are strong and the staff take a real sense of pride in developing new ideas to further improve environments and children's learning opportunities. Coupled with the management's rigorous monitoring of the educational programme and auditing of practice, there is an effective culture of reflective practice operating at all levels of the nursery. There is evidence of sustained improvement over time and a strong drive to continually raise standards. For example, when an activity did not work according to the plan, staff immediately reflected how they could improve the delivery of the activity and learning outcomes for children.

The management and individual staff members have an excellent understanding of their responsibilities in meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements. They act swiftly and rigorously to implement the nursery's safeguarding procedures when needed. They comply fully with guidance from other agencies and carry out a full review following any incident in order to reflect on whether any changes to practice are needed. Staff are vigilant in identifying concerns about children's health and well-being, and do not hesitate to implement the nursery's health procedures. As a result, children's routine and emergency medical needs are met swiftly and appropriately. All staff receive company training and are tested on a range of health and safety issues so that they have the skills and knowledge to protect children and keep them safe. In addition, the nursery employs health and safety consultants to review its procedures to ensure they comply with requirements.

There is a well-established company procedure for the recruitment and vetting of suitable staff and for monitoring their continuing professional development. Senior staff observe and monitor staff practice to highlight areas for improvement and use the appraisal system to identify and plan training needs. Through this process, staff confirm that they feel valued and very well supported, which inspires them to do the best they can.

Partnership working with parents, agencies and other early years providers is extremely strong and plays a significant part in ensuring that children's needs are met and there is seamless continuity in their learning. Communication and sharing of information is encouraged in numerous ways, from notice boards to newsletters and parent forums to consultation evenings. The nursery proactively involves external agencies in working with staff in the nursery to support children with additional needs so that all children reach their potential. It has developed very positive relationships with local schools in order to prepare children for the transition. Teachers visit children in the nursery before they move on so that they can get to know each other and plan for their needs before children start. Parents give glowing comments about how well the nursery runs and describe it as 'such a happy place'.

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	496768
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	909486
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	75
Number of children on roll	115
Name of provider	Child Base Limited
Date of previous inspection	20/05/2010
Telephone number	01707 334715

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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