

The inspection of educational provision for children before compulsory school age

Nursery report on: Rainbow Kindergarten

Registered Nursery Education Inspector: Eifion R Morgan

Date of inspection: 22, 23 January 2008

Contract number: T/059/07N

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Report on the inspection of nursery settings in the non-maintained sector

Name of nursery: Rainbow Kindergarten

Address: Kensington Church Hall, Watergate, Brecon

Post code: LD3 9AN

Telephone: 01874 665487

Person responsible for day-to-day management : Mrs Barbara Hobday

Position: Play Leader.

About the inspection

This inspection took place as part of a national programme of inspections of the educational provision for children before compulsory school age in Wales. It was commissioned by Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales.

The purpose of inspection is to identify good features and shortcomings so that providers can improve the quality of education offered and help children achieve their full potential. Another purpose is to inform parents and the public about the quality of nursery education. A copy of the inspection report must be given to all parents/carers with a child at the nursery and should be available on request to other people.

Inspectors have used a five point scale to record all judgements. Grade definitions are:

- Grade 1** good with outstanding features
- Grade 2** good features and no major shortcomings
- Grade 3** good features outweigh shortcomings
- Grade 4** some good features, but shortcomings in important areas
- Grade 5** many important shortcomings

1.0 Context of the setting

Rainbow Kindergarten is based in the Kensington Church Hall in the Watergate district of Brecon. It is an independent playgroup, established over 30 years ago and has been in the current location since 1990.

The building is of traditional design adjacent to the disused Baptist chapel. It comprises a large room with adjacent kitchen and a toilet beyond. The toilet is some distance from the main hall and necessitates children being accompanied there by an adult. The main room is appropriately furnished with an adequate number of small tables and chairs. The floor is carpeted and areas are designated for different purposes, including a home corner, book corner and areas for other activities, such as painting. Some wall space is available to display children's work but storage space is somewhat limited. On certain days resources have to be put to one side to allow others to use the room later in the day. The Nursery is entered via a small hallway. A limited number of notices are displayed on the outside door and in the hallway.

Outside facilities are limited to a tarmac area between the front entrance to the hall and the pavement. This is secure from the main road but it requires adults to supervise the children and prevent them from wandering down the sides of the buildings. Overall, the space is limited and seriously limits the activities that can take place.

The Nursery is registered to accommodate up to 18 children and currently it is fully subscribed, of whom 11 aged 3-4 years are funded. Children attend the Nursery following their 2nd birthday and leave the Nursery when they are 4 years old.

The play leader is well qualified and has 4 assistants. Two of these have completed their NVQ level 3 training, one has NVQ level 2 and the fourth assistant is due to begin her training.

The Nursery operates on 4 mornings a week (Tuesday – Friday) for 39 weeks of the year. No children at present have special educational needs, but the Nursery is adequately resourced to take children with special needs, as and when the need arises. All children are English speaking and from Brecon and the surrounding area. None are recognised as being 'at risk'. Children represent the full range of ability and backgrounds. None are from minority ethnic communities.

2.0 Main findings of the report

2.1 The overall quality and standards of educational provision and whether or not the provision successfully promotes the goals for children's learning

The quality and standards of educational provision have some shortcomings but there is evidence that these can be put right.

2.2 Standards achieved by children in the six areas of learning

Six areas of learning	Grade for under-fives
Language, literacy and communication skills	3
Personal and social development	2
Mathematical development	4
Knowledge and understanding of the world	3
Physical development	2
Creative development	3

2.3 Inspection judgement on the quality of education provided by the setting

Quality of education	Grade for under-fives
Quality of provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
Quality of planning for children's learning	4
Quality of teaching	3
Quality of assessment and recording of children's progress, and reports for parents and carers	4
Quality of the relationships with parents, carers and the community	2
The contribution made by the setting to children's well-being	3
Quality of the leadership and management of the setting	3
The progress made by the setting in implementing the key issues for action identified in the last inspection report	-

3.0 The standards achieved by children in the six areas of learning

Standards achieved by 3-4 year-olds.

3.1 Language, literacy and communication skills

Good features

Most children have good listening skills and respond well to stories. The majority of children recall songs and particularly enjoy action songs. Older and more able children have a good vocabulary that enables them to communicate their needs, ask questions and understand the adult responses. These older children choose books depending on their interests and handle books appropriately. These children know the main characters in the books they choose and explain some of the events illustrated in pictures. They understand that written symbols have sound and meaning. Most children hold pencils and crayons appropriately and enjoy basic writing experiences and shading. More able children have good speaking skills and are able to speak to the group out loud.

Shortcomings

Some children have underdeveloped listening skills and their ability to talk about stories read to them is limited.

3.2 Personal and social development

Good features

Most children show good self-control and are sensitive to the needs of others. At best, children are concerned about others and help them when they are distressed. Children are confident and form good relationships with each other and with adults. Older and more able children stay on task for increasing lengths of time and work independently. These older children are confident when working in small groups and tackle new learning experiences enthusiastically. Older children are beginning to take responsibility for personal hygiene, as when washing their hands before the mid-morning snack. Evidence shows that children respond positively to new cultural experiences and are beginning the use and understand a limited range of Welsh words and phrases.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings, but children who have only recently started at the Nursery lack self-control and a few tend to be aggressive.

3.3 Mathematical development

Good features

Older and more able children have a basic mathematical vocabulary and use a limited number of words in appropriate context. When playing in sand they use such words as full and empty; above and below correctly. Most children can recreate basic number patterns and recall some number rhymes. Older children can count

and are beginning to recognise number. Most children can match objects and sort familiar items and more able children can name common shapes, such as squares and stars.

Shortcomings

Children's mathematical skills are underdeveloped and many children's overall ability to use mathematical words in context is limited.

3.4 Knowledge and understanding of the world

Good features

Most children have a basic idea of time, such as snack time and home time. They recognise different weather conditions and, when prompted, describe the day in terms of cloudy, rainy or sunny. Children have some basic understanding of seasonal change, such as leaves changing colour in autumn. They know that living things have to be cared for and provide food on their bird table in winter, and older children are beginning to appreciate what foods contribute to a healthy life style.

Children, in their play activities, know that materials have different properties and texture and know that the nature of some foods changes when cooked. Children have used magnifying glasses, such as when looking at flowers, and have grown seeds. They know that seeds vary in shape and size and need water to germinate.

Shortcomings

Children's ability to talk about different materials and their everyday use is limited. Their ability to talk about their own experiences and different places is underdeveloped.

3.5 Physical development

Good features

Most children handle small tools and other objects carefully, showing good control as, for example, using pencils, crayons and scissors. When given the opportunity, children enjoy playing outside, be it running about or riding tricycles or toy cars. In the main, children use the limited space well and show a good awareness of space. Although the area is restricted, they play carefully and safely, avoiding each other well in the confined space. They are sensitive to each other's needs and are willing to share. Children differentiate between walking, running and skipping. Most children use the climbing frame sensibly and safely and are aware of the need to climb carefully. Overall, children show good co-ordination. Children are beginning to understand the changes that occur to their bodies when they are active such as they breathe quicker.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings.

3.6 Creative development

Good features

Most children enjoy singing and a number sing tunefully. They respond well to action songs and enjoy rhythm in music. They know the sound everyday instruments make and match sounds to pictures. Children have created their own music using rain shakers. Children use a variety of materials well in their creative work and cut and glue shapes carefully and appropriately. Children use dough and plasticene in their play, rolling it flat and making different shapes. They know the names of shapes, such as squares and stars. They have experienced different textures, such as when using cornflower “glup”, and enjoy making hand shapes.

Shortcomings

Children’s ability to make their own music and sing and to differentiate sounds is limited.

4.0 The quality of educational provision

The quality of educational provision for 3-4 year-olds.

4.1 The quality of provision for children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Good features

The setting successfully promotes good attitudes and values. Adults are good role models and children are well respected. Adults know the children well and are generally sensitive to their needs. The setting has clear aims about values and these are apparent in practice. Older children have good attitudes – they distinguish clearly between right and wrong and act accordingly. Most children relate well to each other, play co-operatively and are willing to share resources. The setting positively promotes respect for each other.

The Welsh culture and traditions are developed through celebrations such as of St. David’s Day, when children dress up accordingly. Welsh words and phrases are introduced, such as in rhymes and stories.

Shortcomings

Children’s Welsh language is limited and they are reluctant to use Welsh words and phrases.

4.2 The quality of planning for children's learning

Good features

Long term and weekly planning is effective and is generally well directed at promoting the six desirable outcomes for children's learning and bilingualism. Overall, it provides for equality of access and opportunity for all children. Planning includes reference to appropriate activities, a book focus and a weekly evaluation. A good range of child led activities is included as well as the necessary resources. Planning is generally well directed at ensuring equality of access and opportunity for all children. Racial equality and respect for diversity is well promoted. Resources are well used.

Shortcomings

Planning is not sufficiently focused on the next steps in their learning and to ensure that tasks are well matched to children's ability and prior attainment.

Planning does not give sufficient emphasis to developing children's mathematical skills across the curriculum.

4.3 The quality of teaching

Good features

The teaching generally is managed appropriately and organised to develop children's knowledge, understanding and skills. It promotes respect for the individual and allows children a good amount of free choice. Children are encouraged to work in groups when appropriate and adults are vigilant ensuring good behaviour. The teaching encourages children to talk and focuses on their linguistic development. It provides equality of access and opportunity for all children and successfully promotes racial equality and respect for the individual. Resources are used appropriately.

Shortcomings

Teaching is not sufficiently focused on the next steps in children's learning and on ensuring that tasks are well matched to children's ability and prior attainment so that play is purposeful.

4.4 The quality of assessment and recording of children's progress and reports to parents and carers

Good features

The setting maintains records of children's achievement and their progress is ascertained against the desirable outcomes for children's learning. Assessment also includes a termly summary of each individual child's achievement. Some examples of children's work are kept as a record of achievement. Parents, through informal contact with nursery staff, are kept aware of their children's achievement and progress. Written reports are clear.

Shortcomings

Whilst assessment highlights what individual children have achieved it does not identify the next steps in children's learning.

4.5 The quality of relationships with parents, carers and the community**Good features**

In discussion, virtually all parents and carers expressed complete satisfaction with the setting. Children arrive at various times around nine o'clock and are happy to come to the Nursery. In general, children generally engage in the various activities set out for them. Parents and carers reported that they are well informed about their child's progress through the informal contact they have with staff both morning and at lunchtime. Parents reported on the good progress their children had made, particularly in terms of their speaking skills. Parents help with fundraising and individuals from the locality contribute to children's progress and give them an insight into the people in the community that help them. Parents receive a formal end of year report.

Shortcomings

There are no important shortcomings, but reports to parents do not indicate the next steps in children's learning.

4.6 The extent to which the setting contributes to children's wellbeing**Good features**

The setting has policies that underpin the well-established procedures that contribute to children's wellbeing. Child protection policies are in place and staff are well aware of their responsibilities and to recognise signs of all forms of harm and neglect.

Adults are generally vigilant and sensitive to any situation that might be potentially dangerous, such as when children are playing on the climbing frame. Links with parents are good and this enables the staff to be made aware of any issues that might affect the child.

Shortcomings

Occasionally, children are not sufficiently encouraged to partake in the activities and to become part of the small group activities taking place

4.7 The quality of the leadership and management of the setting**Good features**

The setting has clear aims and objectives that are underpinned by a full range of policies. The setting is committed to promoting equality for all and a notable feature of the setting is the good working relationships evident. Staff work together well, are

well qualified and have attended a number of useful course, such as those dealing with Child Protection. Good use has been made of the Early Year Development and Childcare Partnership and their expertise well used. Overall, resources are well managed and best use is made of the accommodation available. The leader is self-evaluative and has strategies to support staff development.

Shortcomings

Insufficient attention has been given to assessment and its use in planning the curriculum and to ensure that the teaching is clearly focused on specific targets for children's learning.

Planning has not ensured sufficient emphasis on developing children's mathematical skills.

4.8 The progress made by the setting in implementing the key issues for inspection identified in the last inspection report

The setting has not been previously inspected by Estyn.

5.0 Recommendations

The setting needs to:

R1. develop the assessment procedures, so as to identify the next steps or targets in children's learning and to share these with parents and carers.

R2. use assessment results to direct short term planning for children's learning so as to cater for the different needs and ability.

R3. plan to ensure that children's mathematical skills are developed across the curriculum.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days, or 45 working days if the plan needs to be translated to or from Welsh, showing how the issues identified above will be addressed. The action plan must be given to all parents/carers with a child at the setting. A copy of the action plan must be sent to Estyn. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection.