

Ready Steady Go Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	100546
Inspection date	04 March 2008
Inspector	Kim Wailing
Setting Address	12a King Henrys Road, London, NW3 3RP
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Registered person	Jennifer Silverton
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 outstanding. 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?

Ready Steady Go Primrose Hill opened in 1988. It is one of four privately owned pre-school provisions in the London Borough of Camden and Westminster. The pre-school operates from three rooms and associated facilities in the basement of a four storey terrace house in Primrose Hill, London. There is an enclosed outdoor area for children's play.

A maximum of 22 children from three to five years may attend at any one time. Currently there are 21 children on roll. Of these, all receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school is open from 09:00 to 14:00 each weekday, term-time only. Play weeks are offered at Easter and in the summer holidays. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who have English as an additional language.

Ready Steady Go Primrose Hill employs five members of staff. Four hold appropriate childcare qualifications, one is working towards qualification and two are working towards further qualification.

Ready Steady Go Primrose Hill was awarded the Celebrating Quality Award by the Camden and Westminster Quality Assurance Scheme in November 2004.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's good health is comprehensively promoted by the pre-school as it takes a range of positive actions. For example, individual children's health needs, including food allergies, are known and sensitively accommodated so that children are able to play a full part in day-to-day activities. In some instances, this has resulted in a review of practice such as the use of sweet celebratory foods.

Robust systems are in place to care for children if they become unwell or have an accident. For example, careful staff deployment means there is a trained first aider always on duty and to accompany children on outings. In addition, there are easily accessible first aid kits that are frequently checked to ensure that contents are replenished. Measures to reduce cross infection are part of the established pre-school routine. For example, hand washing regularly takes place. All required documentation and procedures meet children's health needs. For example, administration of medicines forms and permission to seek emergency treatment for children are in place and regularly reviewed to ensure that there are both pertinent and useful. All practitioners have good working knowledge of procedures designed to safeguard children's health and well-being.

Children and adults sit together at snack and lunchtime to enjoy their food and each other's company. Children bring packed lunches that are appropriately stored. Drinking water is always available. Practitioners remind children to drink freely during the session. This message is further emphasised as children have made notices placed next to jugs of water which act as aid memoirs. Children's understanding of what constitutes healthy eating is reinforced in many relevant ways. Cookery sessions such as making exotic fruit salads, planning and shopping for snack foods are a regular feature of the pre-school routine. These are supplemented by cross-curricular themes which are linked to all aspects of the children's lives such as growing and tending plants. The pre-school guinea pigs are particularly well cared for by the children who ensure that they have a balanced and appropriate diet.

Children make excellent progress in their physical development. The pre-school provides an outstanding range of opportunities for physical play and exercise using well planned and exceptionally well-resourced indoor and outdoor areas. Children have daily access throughout the year to an outdoor enclosed garden where every inch is used to promote children's skills, knowledge and understanding. For example, practitioners guide and support children to a very high degree as they use wheeled toys, small apparatus and tools such as hammers and nails and fixed climbing equipment. Consequently, children gain confidence and proficiency. Children's physical development and coordination is further supported by their involvement in activities such as creative dance and movement sessions and football coaching. In all activities children are able to refine skills, build up stamina and enjoy the exhilaration of being involved in physical and creative play. Alongside these, children are able to use malleable materials such as clay, mark make and practise letter formation, paint and make models which further develops hand and eye coordination. Throughout the inspection period children were engrossed with projects such as making a fairy tale tower from boxes, chicken wire and clay. These adult-led activities run alongside child-initiated projects such as making a builder's pulley where children worked together to design and test a safe bucket pulley, part of the children's current interest in construction and building.

To offer contrast to the busy pace of the pre-school quiet spaces are offered so that children can relax. For example, comfortable and clean cushions are provided in a quiet side room which also accommodates an interesting range of books, a computer and a range of board games. Children during the inspection period were often observed sharing a favourite book with friends or involved in quiet board games.

Overall, children's health and physical well-being is exceptionally well promoted because all systems and routines in place are in the best interests of both the individual child and of children as a group.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children's safety and welfare are given the highest priority at all times. Practitioners have an excellent understanding of how to safeguard children. All attend regular training and have a very clear sense of their duty of care towards the children. Clear and comprehensive policies and procedures, such as robust annual and interim risk assessments, help staff maintain a safe environment for children. Children are involved and enthusiastically take part in daily routines such as sweeping spilt sand, which encourages them to develop a sense of responsibility and awareness of how to keep themselves and others safe. This is reinforced by guidance from practitioners when children use equipment such as the mini trampoline. Children's understanding of the rationale behind safety rules is checked so that they are informed of what for them constitutes a risk. For example, a confident and well-coordinated child was able to carry out a sequence of movements on the trampoline because she understood the importance of jumping away from the trampoline's edge.

Features, such as provision of child-sized furniture and good quality toys, safe storage of equipment and the general layout of the pre-school have created a welcoming child-friendly environment in which children quickly feel secure. Added to this is the commitment of the provision to ensure that all children can access all areas of the setting. This has resulted to changes to the fabric of the building, for example the installation of a child-height hand rail. It is also seen in the constant attention given by staff to the safe but accessible storage of tools and resources, such as art and craft equipment. Alongside this, scrupulous attention is given to organisation of outings. This means that children gain maximum benefit from outings both within walking distance of the pre-school and further afield, for example a boat trip on the river Thames.

Overall, all children are exceptionally well cared for in premises that are safe, secure and have been made suitable for their purpose. Policies, procedures and ways of working means that the pre-school environment gives children everyday access to an excellent range of resources and activities that successfully promotes their development.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are happy and enjoy themselves in the vibrant magical environment that practitioners create. The daily routine is well organised and provides a purposeful structure to the sessions that optimises children's independence skills and choice. Respectful, warm and caring relationships between adults and children are evident which means that children quickly gain confidence and feel 'at home'. All practitioners are very attentive and available to children at all times. This means that children's play is supported at a very high level which maximises

learning. Children's learning is not compartmentalised and children are able to follow interests, develop ideas, learn and practice new skills as well as consolidate learning. As a result, they move seamlessly forward in their learning, encouraged every step of the way by practitioners who acknowledge effort as well as achievement.

Practitioners consistently make excellent use of resources to support children's learning. For example, displays and interest tables are well planned and interactive. Excellent staff deployment and consistently good use of time means that large and small group times, adult-led and child-led activities take place during the day so that children are offered different teaching and learning scenarios. Children display extraordinary levels of collaborative learning during group times. For example, groups of children designing their own books show high levels of independence, creativity and concentration as they work in systematic ways to create their own individual storybook. The daily routine includes slots in which children are offered and enjoy individual support from key staff, for example, when working through an individual learning support scheme or mastering new skills such as being introduced to a new level of a computer programme. During these unhurried and relaxed sessions, children receive full and undivided attention which gainfully promotes their learning. For example, practitioners successfully use props, such as puppets, to enliven one-to-one sessions which engage children so much so that they are extremely reluctant to leave.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding.

Children are making outstanding progress towards the early learning goals because practitioners have excellent knowledge and understanding of child development and the principles that underpin the Foundation Stage. Cross-curricular topics, such as celebrating festivals, offer children a diet of rich, varied and imaginative experiences alongside extending children's interests. All six areas of learning are given equal weighting and are extremely well represented in both the indoor and outdoor environment.

Children display an excellent attitude to learning. They gravitate towards adult-led activities because they are stimulating and exciting. Teaching in all areas, including the out of hours French group, is rigorous, fun and relevant. Outstanding continual assessment systems are in place. The information gained is effectively used to support children's progress so that they are sufficiently challenged, reach new goals, develop an excellent range of skills and learn in enjoyable and meaningful ways.

Overall, children are offered nursery education which is of exceptional quality. Children make outstanding progress in their learning. They have excellent levels of achievements given their capabilities and starting points. Consequently, they become enthusiastic and independent learners.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children and childhood are valued. Considerable time, energy and commitment are invested to ensure that children are able to play an active part in the life of the pre-school community. Ways of working supported by the inclusive ethos of the setting ensures that children have maximum participation in and minimal exclusion from everyday activities. Comprehensive systems, including excellent links with outside agencies such as the Camden early years

intervention team, are in place to support children to ensure that they gain maximum benefit from their time at the pre-school.

Spiritual, moral, social and emotional development is fostered.

Children's knowledge and understanding is being extended and challenged in a safe and stimulating environment that develops their emotional and social skills well. These aspects of development are woven throughout the pre-school's curriculum which is based on nurturing the whole child and recognises the uniqueness and individuality of children. Issues such as diversity and stereotyping are sensitively explored and time is made for sharing ideas and opinions. Ongoing projects such as recycling are followed. The pre-school recently received an award for its contribution to the local authority recycling project.

Overall children's spiritual, moral, social and emotional development is supported by an excellent range of resources, practitioner confidence in supporting children's personal, social and emotional development and positive links with the children's parents and carers.

Children are cared for in a facilitating environment which encourages them to manage their own behaviour and be aware about the feelings of others. Features, such as a kindness tree, are used to illustrate acts of thoughtfulness which enhances children's understanding. Practitioners have high expectations of children's behaviour which children respond to. When appropriate children are given carefully explained boundaries, such as when being asked to sit securely on chairs, in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development. The daily routine and practitioner attentiveness ensure that children are not bored or frustrated but are busy and content. This is particularly evident during tidy-up sessions, where children enthusiastically respond to requests for help, and at the end of the day where children are fully involved in activities until collection by their parents and carers.

Relationships are excellent at all levels. Children are considerate to each other. Older children in particular are excellent role models to younger children. For example, helping them during whole group snack to pour drinks and wipe accidental spills. Children and adults work harmoniously together. As a result children are able to develop a sense of ownership and self-worth.

Parents and carers quickly feel part of the pre-school community. Practitioners are always available to listen and chat to parents and carers so that any immediate concerns are quickly resolved. Parents are actively welcomed into the pre-school and often volunteer to share a talent or a skill, for example, introducing a newly published book. There is an accessible system in place for recording compliments and complaints which meets National Standard requirements. Each setting within the Ready Steady Go group has a parent representative who plays an active part in the organisation. In addition, coffee morning and evening workshop sessions are organised. These offer parents further information on such topics as choosing primary schools in which former parents are invited to share their experiences of selecting schools and pre-school/school transition.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is outstanding.

Excellent systems are in place to inform parents and carers about nursery education, their children's progress and how to support children's learning. Topics are well publicised and useful information is available of how parents and carers can support and extend their children's learning and interests at home.

The pre-school has received many warm letters of appreciation from former parents which complement staff and praise the ethos and organisation of the setting. During the inspection period, current parents were very keen to share their children's positive experiences while attending the pre-school. All stated that they would highly recommend the pre-school to other parents as it offered an outstanding service to their children.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children's care is significantly enhanced by the excellent organisation of the pre-school. All policies and procedures are individual to the setting. All are robust and support the expert practice of knowledgeable and highly skilled practitioners who consistently give the highest priority to protecting children, promoting their well-being and supporting all to develop their potential. All practitioners are involved in reviewing childcare practices using an evaluative action plan. This very effectively identifies possible areas of development, such as the use of observations to highlight children's progress and plan the next steps in their learning.

Excellent induction, appraisal and training opportunities are used to develop practitioner skills. This has created a forward looking lively staff team who work well together and share common aims. Staffing levels exceed National Standard requirements.

The registered person and the pre-school manager are enthusiastic, approachable and open to new ideas. Good liaison with other groups in the chain and outside agencies such as the Tailstock children and family health centre ensure that good practice is disseminated. Involvement with research projects such as Coram family centre's 'listening to young children' and the Department for Children, Schools and Families Primary National Strategy enrich the curriculum offered to children. As a result of the combination of all these factors the pre-school has built on the very good practice noted at the last inspection visit and now offers an exemplary level of care and pre-school education to all children who attend.

Leadership and management of nursery education is outstanding.

Highly effective and innovative leadership combined with continuous evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning ensure that a successful and exciting learning environment is sustained. For example, assessment and planning procedures are constantly evolving so that the curriculum offered to children is relevant in meeting their changing needs. The staff team hold a wide range of childcare qualifications, such as early years professional status, have expert knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how children learn and are very supportive of each other, including new staff members. In addition, the pre-school has good relationships with local state and independent schools so that children make a smooth transition to the next stage of their education.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children for whom it provides. Outcomes for children in all areas are outstanding.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the pre-school was asked to improve systems for recording attendance of children, staff and visitors. This has been fully addressed. Attendance records show accurate times of arrival and departure which strengthens procedures that safeguard children's welfare.

There were no significant weaknesses to report regarding nursery education. However, the pre-school was asked to give consideration to the guidance given to children about the safe use of resources. During the current inspection it was found that practitioners are vigilant and excellent strategies are in place to develop children's awareness of their personal safety and that of others.

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.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

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

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