



Dear Parents/Carers

The Ofsted report from our inspection on the 3rd May is now available to be downloaded off their website or it can be accessed directly from:

<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/CARE/400088>

It does not make good reading. We would encourage you to read the report thoroughly and especially the Inspection Findings section which provides a slightly more balanced assessment of what inspectors observed on the day. We have copied this section verbatim at the end of this letter interlaced with our response and actions. Inadequate in all categories was sadly an automatic judgement as soon as the inspectors declared our accepting verbal consent for the administration of allergy relief medication as a breach of our Statutory Duty, but it is still bitterly disappointing to see the nursery as a whole labelled this way. We do not believe it is, and we hope that what you see from us day to day means you do not believe that it is either.

But this is not to say that it was all about the technical judgement on verbal consent, far from it, and the reality is that the report details a number of additional areas where we simply were not good enough on the day, certainly not at the standard we want to provide, and at the standard you rightly expect of us.

We are approaching our improvement efforts in three distinct phases; immediate, short, and longer term. I can assure you that we are fully committed to addressing all the areas of improvement identified by the inspectors and more, and turning around this judgement when Rainbow is re-inspected sometime within six months of now.

In the short term we have already fully addressed the two safeguarding concerns raised, medication and registration, and you will have received an update from us on the changes we have made. Improvement of our nursery wide planning for teaching and learning and ensuring consistent operation of this across all rooms and all phases in the nursery is not an overnight fix. We feel the root cause in this is communication; within the nursery, between us and you, and between us and other settings your child may attend. Given our size communication within the nursery needs to be very effective, and inspectors highlighted that we have different approaches to planning child development in the three different phases of the nursery. While this may work satisfactorily within an age range it means you as parents do not have a consistent experience as your child grows up and moves between the three parts of the nursery. We want to improve this consistency, and also the frequency of communication back home so you are more aware of what your child is currently learning and what you can do at home to help them to develop.

Beyond these activities and longer term we are looking at how the nursery can embrace new technologies within our teaching and learning practice. We have resisted this to date as we felt there were still material safeguarding and security concerns in the way they were delivered, however it is clear from the feedback we received that we can only more fully involve parents in their child's learning through greater use of technology. This is not part of Ofsted's required improvements but is an area we will report back to you on later in the year.

In terms of specific Ofsted's recommendations the following table takes the specific wording from the section "What the setting needs to do to improve further" (left column) and details our response and action plan (right column).

Action	Update
maintain an accurate record of the names of children being cared for on the premises and their hours of attendance	COMPLETED - parent led registration process introduced, as opposed to practitioner led
develop staff's health and hygiene practices, with specific regard to reducing the risk of cross-infection	COMPLETED - Health and Hygiene Policy and Practice statement updated to be explicit on the matter of handwashing after wiping a child's nose and advised all practitioners
ensure all staff fully understand and implement the correct procedure for administering medication	COMPLETED - additional permissions obtained from parents to cover use of verbal approval under certain conditions, and a YES/NO prompt added to daily registers about medication provided in the hours before attending the setting..
develop a system to monitor the delivery of the educational programmes and children's development to ensure they are supported effectively to make progress	<p>We are focusing our efforts now on improving the various aspects of our Teaching and Learning practice in the nursery. The Inspectors recognised that children develop and progress while in our care but that they could do better if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have higher expectations of them and challenge them more • Our planning is more effective, focussed and consistent across the three phases of the nursery, • If our communication was better within the nursery, between us and you, and between us and other settings your child may use <p>This is not something that can be rushed; nobody benefits from that. We are working hard putting together a plan and will update you shortly with our progress.</p>
develop partnerships with parents and other settings children attend and establish a two-way flow of information to complement children's learning between settings	
obtain more detailed information from parents about their children's capabilities on entry and use this to inform planning that promotes more rapid progress from the outset	
use information from assessments to plan effectively for children's individual needs, interests and next steps in learning that ensure they are challenged in their play.	

We were keen to obtain external advice to challenge our assumptions and proposed improvement actions. We have engaged with Early Years Education Advisors at North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) and they are putting together a plan to support us. Their lead advisor has already reviewed and approved the changes to medication policy and registration process. Broader support on the plan to strengthen of our teaching and learning practice and planning is now underway.

"The Local Authority offers all settings in the county various training opportunities through courses and network meetings, along with regular Officer visits. Rainbow Nursery School are proactive in engaging with these training events and in the time since their Ofsted inspection the nursery has worked with our Officers to evaluate practice and provision, and has quickly responded to any recommendations provided." NYCC Lead Advisor, 17 May

The rules for the provision of Early Years Funding state that settings classed as inadequate cannot provide funding, however NYCC have confirmed that under the circumstances this will not be enforced and grant funding for 3&4 year olds will continue to operate as normal.

This has not been a great month for our nursery but we are proud of how our staff have energised themselves after the inspection and how focused they are on moving forwards and improving. We all feel we were harshly treated on the medication approval issue and to get inadequate for a breach of statutory duty as a result of doing the right thing for the welfare of a child is hard to swallow. But we also feel we let you down on the matter of registration documentation - where having accurate timely written record of which children we have in which rooms is an essential safeguarding measure that ought to be second nature to us. Improvements to our Teaching and Learning practice and parent communication will follow shortly - in a nursery of our size we should have been more vigilant for issues of consistency and communication, we recognise that now, and we will put in place improvements that will better include you in your child's learning here at Rainbow.

Perhaps more in line with what you would expect from us, there were many positives that the inspectors fed back to us, overshadowed unfortunately by the tone of the report. Our staff work tremendously hard to give your children a safe and happy environment, and to find a balance between having high expectations for a child's development, and letting a child enjoy their childhood, laughing and playing with their friends. We hope you can recognise these positive aspects in your day to day experiences of the nursery.

We will write to you again in ten working days time with more details, and we intend to arrange a parent drop in session where we will be able to share with you more information on the changes we will be making to our Teaching and Learning practice, and you can ask us questions you may have relating to your child's learning at Rainbow. In the meantime should you wish to discuss anything about this with us please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Kind regards,

Karl and Harriet Shields
Directors

Ofsted Inspection Findings and Rainbow Nursery commentary:

“Arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. Staff do not always obtain the required written consent to administer medication which puts children at risk.”

We have already written to you on the matter of bringing the administration of non-prescription allergy relief medication into line with our policy on paracetamol suspension. We remain of the view that doing what we did in administering allergy relief to a child on the basis of verbal approval only was putting the child first and we would do the same again if we had our time again. We have already updated our policy and obtained specific additional permissions from parents/carers of every registered child. We have also added a YES/NO reminder to daily registers to prompt parents to advise us if medication has been given to a child in the hours before attending the setting. In addition, following parent feedback for high risk children we are also issuing a more detailed approval form giving us additional authority to administer medication under emergency situations. We need to know, and we need you to know, that in the event of your child having a serious allergic reaction we can rely on your verbal approval, or, having made reasonable efforts to contact you, use our professional judgement and administer allergy relief medication if the circumstance dictate it.

“In addition, staff do not always keep an accurate record of children's attendance. This means staff cannot guarantee children's safety in the event of an emergency.”

Child registration in rooms is a safeguarding matter as in the event of an evacuation of the building there must be an accurate written record of the children present available. On this simple matter we let you down. Morning drop off is a busy time and when the inspectors checked registration records between 8:30am and 9am a small number of registers were not up to date. ANY number of registers not up to date is unsatisfactory, and so we have already introduced changes to strengthen our procedures by making the process parent led, and we have already implemented this. We will, in time, move to electronic registration but that is not something that can be safely rushed into practice so we have implemented these measures in the interim to minimise the risk of a child not being properly registered into and out of a room.

“However, staff are aware of the different types of abuse and of what to do if they are concerned about a child's welfare.”

Inspectors fed back that our staff had a robust awareness of their safeguarding obligations in areas such as disclosure, PREVENT DUTY (signs of radicalisation in children, parent/carers and staff colleagues), procedures to follow if abuse is suspected, and FGM (female genital mutilation)

“Staff are involved in regular supervision meetings and training. However, the monitoring of the educational programme is not sufficiently focused to ensure children make progress. Staff have not established relationships with other settings that children attend. This means information about children's learning is not consistently shared to fully maximise their learning experiences.”

See below on Improving our Teaching and Learning Practice

“The manager follows clear recruitment procedures and ensures all staff are appropriately vetted before they are employed.”

Our internal processes for recruitment are over and above those required by our industry. We want you to have the same absolute trust in our practitioners as we do.

“Although staff assess children's learning, they do not use this information to effectively identify what children need to learn next. This means that activities are not planned well to extend children's learning, provide them with challenge or support them to learn new skills.”

All of the practitioners within the nursery know what they are working on next with their key children and activities are planned around these next steps - however this information has not been documented previously. We are now introducing a 'Next Steps Planning Sheet' for each key person so that this information can be recorded. This will also mean that should your child's key person be on holiday etc. another practitioner can continue working with your child's learning. These next steps will be small targets for your child to work towards based on their development stage and interests, and you will be notified each month what next steps we are working on. We will also offer suggestions as to how you can help with these at home. These improvements will be applied consistently across the three phases of the nursery.

“Staff have not implemented effective procedures to share information with parents and other settings about children's progress towards the early learning goals. In addition, information staff obtain from parents on entry is focused on children's care needs and does not include sufficient detail about their prior learning.”

Inspectors noted that children's stage of development should be assessed and documented straight away upon a child starting at Rainbow whereas our practice has been to focus in the first instance on individual children's needs and routines, but to wait a few weeks for the practitioner to get to know the child before assessing development. To address this we are now offering an additional settling in session which will use the Department for Education guidance “What To Expect When” document as tool for the initial assessment of your child's level of development. This is the parent friendly version of the Early Years Foundation Stage Development Matters framework which is much more detailed and is targeted at practitioner use. “What To Expect When” is already used in the nursery when we work with you jointly on your child's 2 year progress check and this will now link together these activities and ensure they are applied consistently across the nursery for children entering at any age up to school age.

From now each month a “Look What I Will Be Learning At Nursery” information sheet will be sent to parents, letting you know what your child will be learning at Rainbow this month, and what you can do at home to help. It will also include a summary sheet that can be passed on to any other setting your child attends. This will ask them to share with us what your child is working on at the other setting to better inform and shape our planning here. This process is only as good as the the information we get back and so we would encourage you to encourage your child's other settings to feed back to us.

“Despite this, children are settled and have fun. For example, they sing songs with staff and enjoying exploring water. Parents feel that staff are friendly and caring. “

Inspectors fed back to us that they thought the children were happy and settled, and their behaviour was impeccable. This means a lot to us. We will improve our Teaching and Learning practice but our ultimate objective remains that children should be safe and happy with us, that they have fun with us, and parents trust us to put their children’s wellbeing first.

“Weaknesses in leadership and management and care practices compromise children's health and safety. Staff do not follow adequate health and hygiene practices that reduce the risk of cross-infection and prevent germs from spreading. For example, there are occasions during the day when some staff fail to wash their hands after wiping young children's noses.“

The only feedback we received from the inspectors on this topic related to staff handwashing after wiping a child’s nose. We clearly accept this is best practice where reasonably practical to do so, which it isn’t always especially with a group during outside play... We have updated our Health and Hygiene Policy and Practice statement to be explicit on the matter of handwashing after wiping a child’s nose and advised all practitioners at our Ofsted debrief staff meeting last week.

“Nonetheless, children eat a healthy diet and the environment is safe and welcoming. Staff provide children with opportunities to develop their physical skills as they spend time outside in the spacious play areas.”

Inspectors observed the children through lunch and fed back to us that they felt the food was healthy and the menus well thought through. They also observed that the nursery buildings and grounds were very safe, rooms were well resourced, outdoor facilities were well used throughout the day with much evidence of outdoor learning.

“Not all children make the progress they are capable of and children are not consistently challenged. However, they gain some of the skills that help prepare them for school or their next stage in learning. For example, they develop some self-care skills and form friendships as they play together and socialise. Children develop an interest in literacy and enjoy looking at books.”

Inspectors noted that children in our care make progress, however Inspectors felt that our expectations of them should be higher. We are reviewing this but we feel there should always be a balance between ensuring children make expected progress and letting children play and have fun.