



Dear Parents/Carers

Following our letter at the end of May we wanted to write to update you on progress we have made following our Ofsted inspection.

We would firstly like to take the time to thank the staggering number of parents who took the time to show their support for the nursery, but in particular for the practitioners in the rooms. We have passed all your feedback on to the practitioners and it has really helped keep morale high (and even brought about a few happy tears). A point raised by a number of you was about when Ofsted will return so we can rid ourselves of this grading. Their guidelines state that they will re-inspect, unannounced, any setting deemed inadequate within 3-6 months of the inspection date (3 May). Our internal development plan runs to the end of this month, with a further month to bed in and tweak improvements so we are "Ofsted Ready" from the earliest possible time we might expect them (3 August). However, please note that it is common knowledge in the industry that Ofsted are heavily under-resourced since they took inspections back in-house and they are behind on their inspection schedule (we were 2 years overdue on our last inspection) so it may be that we do not see them in this timeframe. Should this be the case and we have not been re-inspected by the end of the year, it is our intention to work with NYCC to secure an external, independent, suitably qualified and experienced individual to perform a mock inspection, and share the results of this with you.

In the past fortnight alongside the changes we have made within the nursery, we have also internally reviewed a number of different providers of software to record, track and share your child's progress at Rainbow. We have identified "Tapestry", a package widely used by Early Years settings and a number of local primary schools, as suitable to help us address a number of the improvement areas identified in the report. Rolling out new software across a setting of our size, multiple rooms, multiple age groups and a large parent base, in a hurry, is not ideal so please bear with us. From next week we will start trialling the package in a small number of rooms, quickly add in live parent trials, and then extra rooms as we gauge its usefulness and practicality. You will see Tapestry mentioned in a number of our actions.

In terms of specific Ofsted's recommendations the following provides the specific wording from the inspection report section "What the setting needs to do to improve further" and details what we have done so far, and what will do. Please note that we are working closely with our NYCC advisor team on our actions and the improvements we put in place have been reviewed and agreed by them.

“maintain an accurate record of the names of children being cared for on the premises and their hours of attendance”

- We have introduced parent led registration across all the nursery, most recently in the Junior Club which went live this week.
- We have already fine-tuned the registration forms a couple of times following feedback from our practitioners, parents and NYCC Officers.
- We have introduced a Split Room protocol for when practitioners take children out of a room and out of earshot. Given we make full use of our outdoor space and given the size of the site this is obviously important to get right. The new procedures mean that a practitioner always has a printed name list of children they have taken out of the room, and the room also has a name list of the children out of the room and the practitioner whose care they are in.
- Management and NYCC Officers are checking these changes are embedded and monitoring their effectiveness.
- We have also started reviewing electronic registration options for children and all staff on site however this is not part of the Ofsted recommendations nor is likely to be introduced within the 3-6 month re-inspection window.

“develop staff's health and hygiene practices, with specific regard to reducing the risk of cross-infection”

- Health and Hygiene Policy and Practice statement has been updated to be explicit on the matter of handwashing after wiping a child's nose and all practitioners advised.
- For outdoor areas where it is simply impractical to bring a group back inside for a practitioner to wash her hands after every child's nose blow, we are placing anti-bacterial hand sanitisers at strategic locations about the site.
- On reviewing our policy NYCC also advised that in addition to our current handwashing/wiping before lunch and tea, we also ensure all children do this before they eat breakfast, which is not currently consistently applied due to staggered arrival times into nursery.

“ensure all staff fully understand and implement the correct procedure for administering medication”

- Additional permissions obtained from parents to cover use of verbal approval under certain conditions
- A YES/NO entry added to daily registers about medication provided in the hours immediately before attending the setting. This is not foolproof clearly but serves as a prompt to parents to advise us of relevant details we need to know.
- A more extensive permissions form has been introduced for high risk children (those with known severe allergies or any children on a care plan for example)
- These procedures have been reviewed by NYCC Officers.

“develop a system to monitor the delivery of the educational programmes and children's development to ensure they are supported effectively to make progress”

- NYCC Officers have started to undertake joint monitoring with nursery area managers to help develop practitioner practice, and identify any training needs.
- The Tapestry system will allow area managers and our nursery manager to have an instantaneous overview of the current development of every child in the nursery.
- It will also allow managers to review how many observations have been captured in each area of learning, when observations were completed, and will enable managers to see clearly any weaknesses within our provision.
- In the interim all managers are checking and feeding back on the Weekly Next Steps Planning sheets that the practitioners in the rooms complete for their key children.

“develop partnerships with parents and other settings children attend and establish a two-way flow of information to complement children's learning between settings”

- Reviewed current procedures to identify opportunities for two-way information sharing between Rainbow and parents and other settings children may attend.
- Tapestry will also be beneficial here. We will trial it initially with a small subset of volunteer parents from across the three areas of the nursery with a view to rolling it out further. This would allow two way communication of written, photo and video observations captured by us, by you, or by another setting you have approved to have access. These observations and their next steps will help complement your child's learning at home and at Rainbow.
- In the interim, from week commencing 18th June a “Look What I Will Be Learning At Nursery” 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 at Rainbow.

“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”

- We reviewed how starting point information was captured and used, both at a “conventional” entry into nursery within the Baby Nursery, but also with older new entrants. As a result we now offer an additional settling in session at all ages of entry to Rainbow which uses the Department for Education guidance “What To Expect When” document as tool for the initial assessment of your child's level of development.
- This has now been trialed with a number of new parents in all three age areas of the nursery, and has been positively received.
- Tapestry will also allow parents to complete and update an About Me for your child which will help us to understand what your child likes and dislikes, information we can use to improve the effectiveness of your child's learning while at Rainbow.

“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.”

- NYCC have delivered training to all practitioners on “Developing Effective Teaching and Learning in Early Years”, specifically the importance of timely, high quality observations and using these to make assessments of a child’s progress and plan next steps.
- We now have across the nursery a consistent planning process using Weekly Next Steps Planning sheets which detail each child in the room, along with what areas of learning are being addressed in that week. It is important to remember that these are dynamic documents as learning should be a balance of child led and practitioner led.
- We are also going to use the trial of Tapestry to provide a quick efficient means of sharing information between us, home to nursery and nursery to home. This information can be little notes on things that happened, a photo taken while out and about, or a “wow moment”. We will test this with a small number of parents in the coming fortnight and report back to you.
- In the meantime please do ask your child’s key person to walk you through your child’s Next Steps and how you can help at home, and let us know what your child is enjoying and interested in at home right now.

Should you wish to discuss these developments in person we will be holding a Parent Drop-In session on Tuesday 19th June 6:30 - 7:30pm. Myself and my wife, along with Lisa Watson (Nursery Manager), Mel Richardson, Stephanie Mugridge and Kelly Hutton (Baby Nursery, Day Nursery, and Preschool Unit Managers respectively) will be present to answer questions. The session will be informal, without a presentation, and more focused on answering your questions. You can just turn up on the day but if you could let us know in advance that you plan to attend it would be helpful for us simply to manage logistics. The wider practitioner staff will not be attending as we are very mindful that we are already asking them to attend a number of out of hours training sessions on top of their busy working days. Should you wish to discuss you specific child(ren)s progress please in the first instance speak to the relevant manager.

The next written update to parents will be with you on Friday 22nd June. 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